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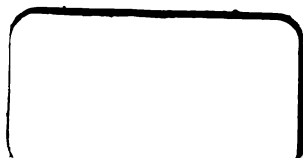


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THE  
Life and Writings  
OF  
THOMAS R. MALTHUS



BY  
CHAS. R. DRYSDALE, M.D.

LONDON:  
CROO STANDING, 7 & 9 FINSBURY SQUARE, E.C.1.  
130 Pages. SIXPENCE.

*Homo sum;  
humani nihil a  
me alienum  
puto.*

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## PREFACE.

SINCE 1877, when the Lord Chief Justice of England in his charge to the jury pronounced the discovery of Malthus to be an irrefragable truth, a vast amount of literature has appeared upon the population question. The conclusion come to by many of the most recent writers has been in accord with that pithy expression of John Stuart Mill, where he says: "Every one has a right to live. We will suppose this granted. But no one has a right to bring children into life to be supported by other people. Whoever means to stand upon the first of these rights must renounce all pretension to the last." Mr. Cotter Morison, a distinguished writer, says, in his work entitled *The Service of Man*: "The criminality of producing children whom one has no reasonable probability of being able to keep, must in time be seen in its true light, as one of the most unsocial and selfish proceedings of which a man nowadays is capable. If only the devastating torrent of children could be arrested for a few years, it would bring untold relief." Sir William Windeyer, of New South Wales, in a judgment delivered in 1888, concerning a Malthusian work, says: "It is idle to preach to the masses the necessity of deferred marriage and of a celibate life during the heyday of passion. . . . To use and not abuse, to direct and control in its operation any God-given faculty, is the true aim of man, the true object of all morality." The Rev. Mr. Whatham, in a pamphlet entitled *Neo-Malthusianism*, says: "It becomes the duty of every thoughtful man and woman to think out some plan to stop or even check this advancing tide of desolation; and the only plan, to my thinking, that is at all workable is artificial prevention of child-birth." Professor Mantegazza, Senator of Italy, says, in his *Elements of Hygiene*, to those affected with hereditary diseases: "Love, but do not beget children." The Rev. Mr. Haweis says, in *Winged Words*: "Overpopulation is one of the problems of the age. The old blessing of "increase and multiply," suitable for a sparsely peopled land, has become the great curse of our crowded centres." Mr. Montague Cookson says: "The limitation of the family is as much the duty of married persons as the observance of chastity is the duty of those who remain unmarried." Professor Huxley, the Bishop of Manchester, Mr. Leonard Courtney, Dr. William Ogle, and the Archbishop of Canterbury have all recently endorsed the truth of the Malthusian law of population, which, as Mr. Elley Finch has truly said, "is, in company with the Newtonian law of gravitation, the most important discovery ever made."

CHARLES R. DRYSDALE, M.D.

23 Sackville-street, Piccadilly, London, W.  
October, 1892.

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THE LIFE AND WRITINGS  
OF  
THOMAS R. MALTHUS.

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A GREAT deal has been said in Courts of Law during the last two years about the Malthusian principle of population. The Lord Chief Justice of England has pronounced that it is an irrefragable truth, and that all parties who have studied such questions know, since the days of the Rev. T. R. Malthus, that the great cause of indigence is the tendency that population has to increase faster than agriculture can furnish food. And yet we have serious doubts whether one out of a thousand of the population of the British Islands knows who Mr. Malthus was, or, indeed, whether he was a Roman, or a citizen of modern Europe, at all. It is, therefore, we are convinced, very important to let his countrymen know that Thomas Robert Malthus was an Englishman; that he was a denizen of the 19th century; and that he lived most part of his life in the neighbourhood of London.

Thomas Robert Malthus was born at the Rookery, near Dorking, in Surrey, in 1766. Those who are interested in the matter will do well to make a pilgrimage, as we have done, to the romantic birth-place of the discoverer of the law of population, the greatest (if we measure discoveries by their effect on human happiness) ever made. Malthus' father was an able man, a friend and correspondent of the noble and unfortunate J. J. Rousseau, and one of his executors. Thomas Robert was his second son, and, as a boy, evinced so much ability that his father kept him at home and superintended his education himself. The son repaid his father's care, and had awakened in him that spirit of independence and love of truth which were ever afterwards the characteristics of his mind. He had two tutors, in addition to his father, both men of genius—Richard Graves and Gilbert Wakefield—the former the author of the "Spiritual Quixote," the latter the correspondent of Fox, and well known in his day as a violent democratic writer and politician.



In 1784, when 22 years of age, T. R. Malthus went to Cambridge; and, in 1797, became a Fellow of Jesus College. After this he took orders, and for a time officiated in a small parish near his father's house, in Surrey. In 1798, appeared his first printed work, which may be seen in the British Museum. It is entitled "An Essay on the Principle of Population, as it affects the future Improvement of Society; with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, Mr. Condorcet, and other Writers."

The writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, from whom these details of Malthus' life are taken, informs us that the book was received with some surprise, and excited considerable attention, as being an attempt to overturn the prevalent theory of political optimism, and to refute, upon philosophical principles, the speculations then so much in vogue, as to the indefinite perfectibility of human institutions. In this remarkable essay the general principle of population, which Wallace, Hume, and others had very distinctly enunciated before him, though without foreseeing the consequences that might be deduced from it, was clearly expounded; and some of the important conclusions to which it leads in regard to the probable improvement of human society were likewise stated and explained; but his illustrations were not sufficient, and he, therefore, sought in travel further confirmation of his theories.

In 1799 he visited Norway, Sweden, and Russia, and, after the peace of Amiens, France; in which countries he busily collected all the data he could bearing upon his researches. In 1815 he was appointed to the professorship of political economy and modern history at Haileybury, near London, which chair he occupied until his death in 1834, at the age of 70. He left behind him one son and one daughter. The son is, we believe, still alive, or was so a few years ago.

The account given by Mr. Malthus of the way in which he discovered the law of population is to this effect. His father, Mr. Daniel Malthus, a man of romantic and somewhat sanguine character, had espoused warmly the doctrines of the great writers Condorcet and Godwin, with respect to the perfectibility of man, to which the sound sense of the son was always opposed; and when the subject had been very frequently discussed between them, and the son had always objected to Godwin's views, on account of the tendency of population to increase faster than subsistence, he was asked by his father to put down in writing his views on this point. The result was the *Essay on Population*; and his father was so much

struck with the value of the arguments, that he recommended his son to publish it.

In the first edition of this work he principally deals with the views of Condorcet and Godwin; but on his return from the Continent, where he had collected ample materials, the state and prospects of the poor became the prominent features of the second edition, which appeared in two volumes, in 1805.

The latter years of the life of Mr. Malthus were passed in the midst of his family, in the performance of his professional and professorial duties, and in the editing of the various editions of his work and other treatises on political economy. In proportion as the views enunciated in his *Essay on Population* became known, his fame was extended. Most of the statesmen of his time, and the whole of the eminent political economists of Great Britain, adopted his opinions; and thus the way was prepared for the adoption of a better system of poor-law relief than the one which at that time was ruining England. On the Continent, too, and indeed wherever science extended, his views were adopted by the foremost writers on political economy. He was elected a member of the most eminent scientific societies abroad, such as the Institute of France and the Royal Academy of Berlin. At home, he founded the Political Economy Club and the Statistical Society.

In the other departments of the science of Political Economy Malthus was a distinguished writer. He was, in company with Dr. West, a promulgator of the theory of rent, first mooted, it seems, by a Scotchman, Dr. Anderson, a contemporary of Adam Smith. Ricardo, the eminent political economist, has acknowledged his deep obligations to Malthus, for his exposition of this theory.

The great Principle of Population has been examined carefully and accepted as a splendid discovery by the master minds of all countries since the discoverer's death in 1834. To say that it is looked upon as axiomatic by the two Mills, by Ricardo, Senior, Cairnes, Alexander Bain, Garnier, Bertillon, Fawcett, William Ellis, and William Hunter, is to say that its truth has been fully proved to the ablest thinkers on social science and on political economy that this and other European States have produced.

It was, before the days of Malthus, the almost universal belief of mankind that the wealth of a country was in proportion to its population. Statesmen, poets, and philanthropists were constant in their endeavour to secure as rapid a multiplication of the citizens as possible: and, up till the publication of his

essay—indeed, long after that event, it was the custom in many European States for the Government to give prizes to such parents as had given birth to and reared a more than averagely large family of children. Such a law, indeed, was not abrogated until about 25 years ago in Sardinia.

Mr. Malthus clearly exposed the error of such teaching. He showed that, such is the immense power of increase in the human family, it is probable that, were food plentiful enough, population might double in some fifteen years, or even less. With incredible assiduity he read and examined ancient history and the statistics of European countries and their colonies, for the confirmation of his theory. He found, for example, that after the great pestilences which had from time to time ravaged European states, the surviving population had been so well fed and housed that it had been enabled to replace the blanks left by deaths usually in a very few years—in twenty years in several instances.

Turning to the colonies of Great Britain in the United States, Malthus confirmed what the great pioneer of all progress in political economy, Adam Smith, had noted, namely, that the colonists of those States had doubled since their settlement in considerably less than twenty-five years in some cases, without taking into account any fresh immigration. In an article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, written by Malthus, he gives most accurately the figures of the doubling of the population of the United States from the year 1790 until 1820 ; and shows, from statistics, that very few immigrants had arrived from Europe during this period. Making ample allowance for the contingent for such immigration, Malthus showed that, from 1790 to 1815, the population of the States had more than doubled. Hence he was led to the following expression :—  
“Population, when unchecked, goes on doubling every twenty-five years, or increases in a geometrical ratio.”

He next shows that the tendency of agricultural produce fit for the food of man is to increase very much more slowly than man could increase. This has been termed the “law of agricultural increase,” and is very easily understood by taking an example. Let us grant that the average quantity of wheat that can be grown at present on an acre of ground in England is thirty bushels. It would be clearly impossible to suppose that in 25 years 60 bushels per acre could be produced ; in 50 years, 120 bushels, and so on. Whereas, the tendency of population to double in from 12 to 25 years is clear enough, when it is remembered that the human female commences to be capable

of reproduction at about fifteen and continues so until forty-five, in this climate. Were European women to marry as early as the Hindoo women do, there would be a possibility, if food were forthcoming, of a doubling of the population in some fifteen years or less.

Mr. Malthus closely examined the statistics of European nations when he wrote in 1805. Before the commencement of this century, he found that the time taken for doubling of the populations of Europe was often as great as some five hundred years. This remark had been anticipated by Adam Smith, who had all the materials, had he sufficiently reflected on them, to have written accurately on the Population Question, since he also was acquainted with the rapid doubling of civilised peoples, when they had been conveyed to new and fertile colonies such as the United States. Here, then, was the conclusion of Malthus, which is perfectly obvious when it is clearly stated. Whenever population, in Europe or elsewhere, fails to double itself as rapidly as it does in new countries, it must be checked in some way or other. Proceeding a little further, he adds that it must either be checked by there being fewer births or a greater number of deaths. Whatever tends to produce a smaller number of births is included by Malthus among the *preventive checks* to population: whatever leads to a greater number of deaths, among the *positive checks*.

His travels through Europe were mainly directed towards the inquiry as to what kind of check was prevalent in each European state. In ancient times, he saw that the positive checks to population had everywhere extensively prevailed. Plagues and famines, with war and infanticide, had been the checks in Greece and Rome, as now in China and Hindostan. In the Europe of his day, all of these positive checks existed, in greatly diminished proportions, indeed, but still they were far from unknown. The extreme prevalence of celibacy, however, struck him in all the civilised states of Europe which he then visited. He noticed that, in many parts of the Continent, where the death-rate was lower than elsewhere, it was the custom for the women to marry very late in life. In one canton of Switzerland, where comfort and longevity were most notable, Malthus found, on enquiry, that it was the custom for the spinsters to delay their bridal day till long after the age of thirty. On the other hand, wherever marriages were early, and the birth-rate was high, he found on investigation that the death-rate was also above the average.

From this experience of his, he was led to the conclusion

that early marriage, as a rule, was certain to lead to poverty and the positive checks to population; and, therefore, in his practical maxims for improving the condition of the poorer classes, he looked forward solely to the exercise of that celibacy, which he had found so often accompanied by long life and material comforts.

Had Mr. Malthus lived at this moment, he would have been aware of the remarkable fact, that the French peasantry of modern days have, simply from experience and without any theory, become acquainted with the results of his enquiries, that a rapid increase of births leads inevitably to poverty and early death. To quote from the most celebrated of French statisticians, M. Maurice Block, the artisans of towns, and peasant proprietors of whole districts of France, are accustomed to limit the size of their families to two children; and thus, although France is the most noted for its number of married couples of all European States, it is also the country in all Europe which is the least rapid in the increase of its population. The population check in France, then, Malthus, had he lived, would have found to be, not celibacy, but the *voluntary limitation of families*, in the midst of a married and most moral and domestic community. The great philanthropist, who was so distinguished for his charming temper and amiability, could not have failed, we may rest assured, to have, with J. S. Mill, Garnier, and Sismondi, given the preference to the modern French checks to population over all others.

In closing this chapter, we should like to refer to a few additional biographical circumstances of Malthus' life. They have been supplied by Mr. Robert Porter, of Beeston, Notts., a gentleman well known as an admirer of the great discoverer, and as an expositor of his views. "The Reverend Henry Malthus," Mr. Porter writes, in February, 1879, "the only son of Thomas Robert Malthus, lives at Effingham. The only daughter, Emily, was living at Bathwick Hill Villa, Bath, some time back. She married Captain Pringle. I have many letters from her, as also from her mother, who was living with her in 1862, in her 86th year, when she had a photograph taken from the family portrait, and sent to me with a scrap of his MS. handwriting. I send you this to see and peruse. I wrote to Mrs. Pringle about the memoir of her Father in his *Political Economy*, saying there was much of Mr. Daniel Malthus in it, but nothing about his mother, from whom I thought Mr. Malthus had received his best qualities. In letter 3 you will see the reply, and I think will be in-

terested to read it. Dr. Anderson really *discovered* the Law of Rent, as you may see in Vol. 6 of *The Bee*, pp. 292—300.—1791.”

The information given by Mrs. Pringle, and referred to in the above letter to Mr. Robert Porter, is as follows. After referring to Mr. Ellis’ teachings in the *Friend of the People*, written about the year 1860, she speaks of the personal appearance of her father as follows: “The likeness (photograph sent) is excellent, and to enable you to form a complete idea of his personal appearance, I must tell you that his complexion was fair, with light and curling hair, red whiskers, and bright darkish blue eyes. His height was five feet eleven inches, and a very well-formed figure.” Another granddaughter of Mrs. Malthus, the mother of Thomas Robert, says that Daniel Malthus, the father, although refined, was a selfish man. His wife was devoted to him, and although not a *talented* woman, was accomplished, and educated her own daughter without a governess. All her children were devoted to her, especially her eldest son. Thomas Robert was, perhaps, more attached to his father; but his mother’s amiability descended to him, for he was never known to say a harsh word of anyone, although more attacked than any writer has perhaps ever been. It appears that Malthus died, not of heart disease, but of bronchitis. His mother’s maiden name was Graham, and she was of an old Scotch family. Here is one sentence to depict her character:—“In short, I imagine her gentle, unobtrusive, loving, romantic, and perfectly unselfish; but not the sort of person to form her sons’ characters, though to attract their affections.”



## CHAPTER II.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE "ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLE  
OF POPULATION."

**C**OMPARATIVELY few students of Political Economy at the present day appear to read Malthus' celebrated Essay in the original. This, in our opinion, is a great mistake. That work is as readable now as it was when it attracted such well-merited attention at the commencement of this century; and the statistics given by the learned author become even more valuable than ever, owing to the important additions made to them of recent years by the various modern writers on Social Economy.

The third edition of Malthus' essay, which appeared in 1806, is now before us: and consists of two volumes of about one thousand pages in all, of large type, full of the most interesting accounts ever given of the manners and customs of the different nations of ancient and modern times. The first volume is divided into two books. In Book I. there are fourteen chapters, the first of which states the Law of Population, or the *tendency* which population has to increase more rapidly than the means of subsistence. The second chapter treats of the general checks to population, and the way in which these operate. Then come three most interesting chapters on the checks to population among savage nations, followed by one on those obtaining among the ancient inhabitants of Northern Europe. Chapter seven gives an account of the checks existing among modern pastoral nations; and this is followed by an account of the checks in Africa, and Northern and Southern Siberia. Then follows a most interesting account of the brutal checks to population in Turkey, and the lamentable starvation checks of Hindostan and China. Book I. ends with chapters on the checks to population among the ancient Greeks and Romans.

In Book II. there is a most important account given by Mr. Malthus of the results of his extensive travels in Europe, in 1799 and after years, with details of the checks to population existing in Norway, Sweden, Russia, Germany, Switzerland, France, England, Scotland, and Ireland.

If those persons who at present think that the Malthusian law of human increase has been found by subsequent investigation to be erroneous, could only be induced to read Mr. Malthus' essay in the original, they would soon find that all these objections have been anticipated in that celebrated work, and perhaps acknowledge, with Mr. J. S. Mill and other economists, that the truth is "axiomatic," or no longer requiring discussion. In the last pamphlet, indeed, which we have seen, dedicated to one of the most deservedly popular of modern British authors, Thomas Carlyle, the writer, like Mr. Carlyle himself, speaks as if the law of Malthus *had* been refuted; but, as usual in such cases, it is clear that the writer has not the least idea of what the celebrated Essay on Population was written to prove.

In his first chapter, Malthus observes that Euler, a great mathematician, had calculated that, on the supposition of such a moderate amount of mortality as one in 36 (which is considerably higher than our present mortality of one in 42 in England), and with the further supposition of the births being to the deaths as three to one (a ratio which seems nearly to hold good, at present, in New Zealand), the period of doubling a population would be only  $12\frac{1}{2}$  years; and Sir William Petty, in his work on *Political Arithmetic*, supposed a doubling to be possible in some ten years.

Malthus compares this *tendency* with the *actual increase* of man in such countries as China and Japan. He observes that it may fairly be doubted whether the best directed efforts of human industry could double the agricultural produce of China even once, in *any* number of years. The difference between the time of doubling, which has taken place of late in some twenty or thirty years, in North America, and in our Australian colonies, when compared with the slow increase of the Chinese population, gives the most complete view of the case that can be obtained.

In countries which are naturally healthy, and where the *preventive* check is found to prevail, too, with considerable force, the *positive* check, as Malthus observes, will prevail very little, and the mortality will be small; but in *every* country some of the checks are and will always continue to be, in constant operation: so that mankind has only a *choice* of evils, for we cannot possibly escape from *some* of the population checks, which are inevitable.

In his third chapter our author reviews the population checks in the lowest stage of human society; and shows how impos-



sible it is for such unfortunate peoples as the natives of the Tierra del Fuego, or of Van Diemen's Land, to increase rapidly in numbers, owing to their extreme ignorance of the laws of nature. In New Zealand, Captain Cook found the checks to population to be war, and starvation so great as to prompt to cannibalism, in a country where, as it is at present colonized by a civilized people, the deaths seem not to exceed fifteen per 1,000 annually, and population doubles in about twenty years or less, without counting immigrants.

In Mr. Malthus' day, there still existed large numbers of those unfortunate races of American Indians, which are now so rapidly disappearing in the modern "struggle for existence" with civilised Europeans. Then, as now, these tribes lived principally by hunting and fishing, most narrow modes of subsistence. The mortality of infants among such tribes was always enormous, and the Jesuit missionaries mentioned how that the Indians of South America were subject to perpetual diseases for which they knew no remedy; scarcely ever did the individuals of such tribes attain to an advanced age; and the checks to population among them were chiefly of the *positive* kind—plagues, starvation, brutal wars, and disease. The North American Indians, too, lived in such a state of filth and over-crowding in their huts, that every infectious disease carried off vast numbers. Cannibalism, according to Captain Cook, as seen in New Zealand and other islands, originated in the fearful privations experienced by such peoples when their numbers were pressing on the food supplies.

And here let us quote Malthus' own words,—“It is not that the American tribes have never increased sufficiently to render the pastoral or agricultural state necessary to them; but, from some cause or other, they have not adopted in any great degree these more plentiful modes of procuring subsistence, and therefore cannot have increased so as to become populous. If hunger alone could have prompted the savage tribes of America to such a change in their habits, I do not conceive that there would have been a single nation of hunters and fishers remaining; but, it is evident, that some fortunate train of circumstances, in addition to this stimulus, is necessary for the purpose.”

In chapter V., our author gives a curious account of how population was checked in the islands of the South Seas. It is among such islands as these (and, indeed, the British islands in ancient times resembled them greatly), that we trace the origin of many of the singular institutions destined to retard

the rapid increase of mankind—cannibalism, late marriages, the consecration of virginity, and ferocious punishments against such women as reproduce the species at too early an age. Captain Cook found such a constant state of warfare existing among the various tribes in New Zealand, that each village in its turn applied to him to assist them in destroying the others. In his third voyage he adds that warlike ferocity is so constant "that one hardly ever finds a New Zealander off his guard, either by night or day."

In Otaheite and the Society Islands, again, where the size of the islands was too small, and the knowledge of navigation acquired by the islanders too scanty to make it possible for population to increase rapidly, all sorts of sufferings were seen among the poorer classes of the people; the richer classes, however, seemed, according to Captain Cook, to check their own increase by having recourse to the fearful practice of infanticide, to an enormous and unparalleled extent. Even with these checks, however, population, in the South Sea Islands, occasionally pressed so hard on subsistence that animal food became very scarce in certain seasons, and such destructive wars ensued that Captain Vancouver, on visiting Otaheite, in 1777, and again in 1791, found that most of his friends of 1777 were dead, having been killed in the wars. Prostitution, and destruction of female infants, were extremely common in Otaheite in Captain Cook's time.

In taking a general review of that department of human society, classed under the name of savage life, the only advantage Malthus notices is the possession of a greater degree of leisure by the mass of the people, than that possessed by those of civilised countries. "There is less work to be done, and, consequently, there is less labour. When we consider the incessant toil to which the lower classes, in civilised societies, are condemned, this cannot but appear to us a striking advantage; but it is probably overbalanced by greater disadvantages."

This remark of Mr. Malthus shows us, to a certain extent, on what J. J. Rousseau founded his belief as to the superior happiness of the state of nature over the civilised. Had Rousseau read the Essay on Population, he could not, we believe, have failed to perceive that the evils of civilisation are almost solely due to the universal want of knowledge of the Population Law. The late marriages, and prostitution, so bitterly inveighed against by that author, are merely the sorrowful population checks of most modern civilised nations, that have passed into

the pastoral and agricultural stages of society, and have not yet proceeded far enough to control the enormous fecundity of the race by less painful and more thoughtful expedients than those which Jean Jaques Rousseau so clearly perceived and so powerfully denounced in the French society of the reign of Louis XV.

After speaking of the positive checks to population which have been so universal among savage nations, Mr. Malthus proceeds in chapter vi. to treat of the checks which prevented increase among the ancient inhabitants of the North of Europe. Astonishment has often been expressed at the the hordes of warriors that, at various periods of the decay of the Roman Empire, were poured down upon it from the Northern nations. Mr. Malthus explains, with great clearness, that, wherever the customs of such nations as composed the immigrants were such as to conduce to health and early marriage, the immense fecundity of the race fully accounts for these crowds of immigrants so rapidly succeeding each other until the destruction of Rome ensued. Machiavel, in the beginning of his *History of Florence*, says: "The people who inhabit the northern parts that lie between the Rhine and the Danube, living in a healthful and prolific climate, often increase to such a degree, that vast numbers of them are forced to leave their country and go in search of new habitations. These emigrations proved the destruction of the Roman Empire."

There can be no doubt that this is a true account of the way in which poverty and over-rapid reproduction cause emigration in ancient and modern times; and we cannot help regarding the present warlike policy of England and Germany as signs of a growing over-population in both of these States, which tempts the *proletaire* members of the governing classes to seek ever fresh territory, and makes the other classes of society so tolerant of such unjust conduct in their rulers. In fact, it may be truly said that the adoption of neo-Malthusian views is the only really revolutionary measure, and the only safeguard of nations against wars of conquest or intestinal dissension.

In chapter vii. Malthus speaks of the checks to population among modern pastoral nations. Pastoral nations, although not so poor as hunting nations, are, of course, far more unable to acquire wealth than nations that have adopted agricultural pursuits. Hence, population increases but slowly in such communities, and they are often on the verge of famine for

lengthened periods. Volney, in his travels, says, that the pastoral tribes of the Arabian desert deny that the religion of Mahomet was made for them. "For how," they say, "can we perform ablutions when we have no water; how can we give alms when we have no riches; or what occasion can there be to fast during the month of Ramadan, when we fast all the year?"

And yet it seems that in Arabia, as elsewhere, the direct social encouragements to population are very great. A Mahometan is taught that one of the great duties of man is to procreate children to glorify the Creator. But, as Mr. Malthus truly says, "While the Arabs retain their present manners, and the country remains in its present state of cultivation, the promise of paradise to every man who had ten children would but little increase their numbers, though it might greatly increase their misery."

The checks to population existing in Africa seem to be chiefly of the positive kind. Incessant warfare, with death by famine or epidemics, are described by the early travellers on that Continent, Park and Bruce, as carrying off whole tribes. Park states that, independently of violent causes, the struggle for food is so great in most African states, that longevity is rare among the negroes. At forty, most of them become grayhaired and covered with wrinkles, and but few of them survive the age of fifty-five or sixty. There was, in his day, but little difficulty in obtaining slaves in times of famine in Africa, as even free negroes were often so pressed with hunger as to entreat, according to Dr. Laidley, to be put on his slave-chain, to save them from starvation. Bruce reports that, in many of the tribes, women begin to be mothers at the age of eleven: and to such a life of privation and care does this rapid reproduction lead, that he speaks of the women in some States near Abyssinia as becoming, at the age of twenty-two, "more wrinkled and deformed by age, than an European woman is at sixty."

Mr. Malthus, after a very curious account of the checks to population in Northern and Southern Siberia, then passes on in chapter x., to treat of the Turkish Dominions and Persia, and his remarks are especially interesting to our modern politicians. The fundamental cause of the low rate of increase of population in Turkey, he truly remarks, is undoubtedly the nature of the Turkish government. Its tyranny, its feebleness, its bad laws, and worse administration of them, with the consequent insecurity of property, throw such obstacles in the

way of agriculture, that the means of subsistence are necessarily decreasing yearly, and with them, of course, the number of people. It is calculated at the present day that population would double only once in 555 years in Turkey, owing to the positive checks caused by its wretched government. The population of modern Turkey is about 28 millions, or only some 16 persons per square mile; and, in 1876, it was stated in governmental reports that the population of the empire was fast declining, and its cultivated lands falling into the condition of deserts. In Europe, as in Asia, we are informed by Malthus, it was the maxim of Turkish policy, originating in the feebleness of government, and the fear of popular tumults, to keep the price of corn low in all the considerable towns. "When Constantinople is in want of provisions, ten provinces are perhaps famished for a supply. At Damascus, during the scarcity of 1784, the people paid only one penny farthing a pound for their bread, whilst the peasants in the villages were actually dying with hunger."

As to the checks to population in Persia, the dreadful convulsions to which that country has been subject for many hundred years must have been fatal to her agriculture. The periods of repose from external wars and internal commotions have been short and few, and even during the times of profound peace, the frontier provinces were constantly subject to the ravages of the Tartars. Hence the slow increase.

One of the most valuable parts of the *Essay on Population* is that wherein Mr. Malthus treats of the checks to population in Hindostan and Tibet. In Hindostan, according to the ordinance of Menu, the Indian legislator, marriage is very greatly encouraged, and a male heir is considered as an object of the first importance. Hindoo maidens are married at the age of eleven, and even younger: and become mothers before they attain the age of twelve. For such reasons, Hindostan has been one of the most noted countries in the world for devastations, epidemics, and famines. The lower classes have for centuries been reduced to the extremest poverty, and compelled to adopt the most frugal and scanty mode of subsistence. Whilst the average annual income per head in England was calculated, by Mr. Henry Fawcett in 1870, at about some eighteen pounds; in Hindostan, it was lately stated by Mr. J. Bright, that about two or three pounds sterling for food is all a Hindoo peasant gets. And, as Lord Derby remarked in his admirable Rochdale speech in 1879, the people of Hindostan seem to be a marked example of

how very low a standard of living a nation may people down to.

Recent years have made us familiar with the tales of Indian famines; but there is nothing novel in these in the history of that long over-peopled country. One of the Jesuits cited by Malthus says that it is impossible for him to describe the misery to which he was witness during the two years' famine in 1737 and 1738, and another Jesuit writes, "Every year we baptize a thousand children, whom their parents can no longer feed, or who, being likely to die, are sold to us by their mothers in order to get rid of them."

Tibet, it seems, according to Malthus, is perhaps the only country where habits tending to repress population are, or were, universally encouraged by the government. Celibacy is there much encouraged among government employes, and the number of monasteries and nunneries is considerable. "But, even among the laity, the business of population goes on very coldly. All the brothers of a family, without any restriction of age or of numbers, associate their fortunes with one female, who is chosen by the eldest and considered as the mistress of the house." It is evident that this custom, combined with the celibacy of such a numerous body of ecclesiastics, must operate, says Malthus, in the most powerful manner as a preventive check to population. Yet, according to Mr. Turner's account, it appears that the population of Tibet presses on the means of subsistence. Tibet, in Mr. Turner's time, seems to have suffered, as England now does, and as we hear that even our wealthy colonies of Victoria and New South Wales do, from a set of paupers created by an extremely unwise system of out-door relief—a system which but too often manufactures the very paupers it wishes to relieve.

Mr. Malthus' account of the Checks to Population in China and Japan, contained in chapter xij. of his work is one of the most important contributions to the question conceivable. His authorities are Duhalde's History of China and Sir G. Staunton's Account of his Embassy to China. According to the former author, writing in 1738, the population of China was then estimated as at least three hundred and thirty-three millions. At present China is said to contain some four hundred millions.

The causes of the great populousness of China are, according to Malthus, its advantageous position as to climate and irrigation, and the very great encouragement given to agriculture

by the monarchs of that nation. The Emperor himself every year, to set an example, ploughs a few ridges of land, and the mandarins of every city perform the same ceremony. The whole surface of the empire is, with trifling exceptions, dedicated to the production of food for man alone. There is no meadow, and very little pasture, and no waste land. Even the soldiers of the Chinese army are mostly employed in agriculture.

The extraordinary encouragements given to marriage also contribute to make China more populous in proportion to the extent of its territory than any other country. The permission given by parents to abandon their children, which exists in China, is shown by Sir G. Staunton to facilitate marriage, and cause even greater over-population than in more civilized states where such barbarities are not permitted. The effect of this early marriage and rapid peopling is to subdivide property; and it is a common remark among the Chinese, that fortunes seldom continue considerable in the same family beyond the third generation. One of the Jesuits, writing on China, says: "The richest and most flourishing empire of the world is, in one sense, the poorest and most miserable of all. Four times as much territory would be necessary to put the inhabitants at their ease."

It cannot be said in China, as it often is said in Europe, that the poor are idle, and might gain a subsistence if they would work. The labours and efforts of these poor people are beyond conception. "A Chinese will pass whole days in digging the earth, sometimes up to his knees in water, and in the evening is happy to eat a little spoonful of rice, and to drink the insipid water in which it is boiled." This is the remark of a Jesuit: and although it is evidently an exaggeration, since modern researches on diet show that such food could not maintain animal existence, it shows what miseries are caused by the peopling down to such a low standard of comfort.

"The procreative power," says Malthus, "would, with as much facility, double in twenty-five years the population of China, as that of any of the States of America." We can readily sympathise, then, with the alarm felt by our fellow-countrymen in Australasia and California, at the possible invasion of the untold millions which China could, with the greatest facility, pour into them. It is, for this reason, that the Legislature of New South Wales has quite recently, by a large majority, passed a Bill to stem the current of Chinese immigration. It will be for the ultimate advantage of the

human race that nations with such a low standard of comfort as the Chinese, should learn that they must imitate the more prosperous nations in prudential restraint before they can become entitled to claim to become citizens of such countries.

We have lately understood the magnitude of a Chinese famine, where millions of unfortunate people are reduced to misery and death at once, from the failure of the crops. Mr. Malthus notices that, in such times of dearth, China can obtain no assistance from her neighbours: and must perforce draw the whole of her resources from her own provinces. When such failures of the crops occur, the government of China pretend to be very assiduous in providing schemes for the miseries of the people; but, in the meanwhile, hosts of unfortunates are starved to death, since there is not enough food forthcoming, so little margin is left, on account of the very scanty share falling to the lot of each, even in times of plenty.

In this chapter upon China and Japan Malthus makes an acute remark on the question, which is sometimes discussed in this country, whether the consumption of grain in the manufacture of spirits is ever a cause of famine. The whole tendency of such a manufacture is, he asserts, to the contrary. "The consumption of corn, in any other way but that of necessary food, checks the population before it arrives at the utmost limits of subsistence, and, as the grain may be withdrawn from this particular use in the time of a scarcity, a public granary is thus opened richer probably than could have been formed by any other means. When such a consumption has been once established, and has become permanent, its effect is exactly as if a piece of land, with all the people upon it, were removed from the country. The rest of the people would certainly be precisely in the same state as they were before, neither better nor worse, in years of average plenty; but, in a time of dearth, the produce of this land would be returned to them, without the mouths to help them to eat it."

This fact should be borne in mind by Mr. Hoyle and other writers on abstinence from alcohol, since the advocacy of a good cause is often impeded by incorrect reasoning. "China, without her distilleries, would certainly be more populous," says Malthus, "but on a failure of the seasons would have still less resource than she has at present, and as far as the magnitude of the cause would operate, would, in consequence, be more subject to famines, and those famines would be severe." Temperance advocates, then, should, if possible, try to substitute a less injurious luxury in the place of alcohol, which



causes so much disease; and not forget that the poverty of over-population is one of the great causes of drunkenness.

The principal cause of the great populousness of Japan is doubtless the persevering industry of the inhabitants. The checks to population in Japan have been famines, as in China and Hindostan; but the Japanese are also more warlike than the Chinese, and there is much less encouragement given to marriage in Japan than there is in China. Hence the superior enlightenment of the Japanese, and the intelligence which has recently made them so alive to the benefits conferred on mankind by European civilization.

The all-important nature of the discovery of Malthus may be better seen by comparing the condition of China with that of the United States of America, than by any other example. So far advanced have the Chinese been, for perhaps some thousands of years, in the knowledge of the art of agriculture, that it is now probable that the four hundred millions at present occupying the Empire could not possibly double in *any given number* of years. Whereas, the population of the United States has for the last century continued to double, aided by immigration, in periods of less than twenty-five years. He must, indeed, be gifted with a poor capacity for reason, who does not, on comparing these two rates, at once see, that the grand problem for our race is to prevent the instinct of reproduction from causing the terrible evils of early death, and chronic poverty. To introduce the new Malthusian views into China and Hindostan is the only way to cope with the famines, infanticides, and life-long starvation of these terribly over-peopled countries.



## CHAPTER III.

OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION AMONG THE ANCIENT  
GREEKS AND ROMANS.

THE more equal division of landed property among the Greeks and Romans in the earlier period of their history, must have tended greatly to encourage population, since agriculture, Mr. Malthus says, is the only kind of industry which permits of multitudes existing. When, as often occurred, the number of free citizens did not exceed ten or twenty thousand, every individual would naturally feel the value of his own exertions, and know that, if he left his lands idle, he would be wanting in his duty as a citizen. Hence, a great attention was paid to agriculture in Greece. Population rapidly increased, and colonization was common, so that the legislators of Greece had their attention frequently called to the question of over-population. Mr. Malthus had already shown that the practice of infanticide, as existing in China, tended rather to increase population, by tempting people into early marriage. Solon permitted the exposition of infants, Mr. Malthus is inclined to think, partly for the purpose of tempting the citizens into early marriage, and thus increasing the population.

The great philosophers of Greece, such as Plato and Aristotle, are the origin of all real civilisation in succeeding ages throughout Europe: and have saved us from the deluge of crude theologies, such as those of Palestine or less cultured tribes. The so-called divine law of "Increase and multiply and replenish the earth," and other equally vague and meaningless exclamations, are in strongest contrast with the scientific reasoning of these *masters of all the learned*. Plato, in his "Republic," limits the number of free citizens in his ideal state to five thousand and forty. Procreation, he maintains, when it proceeds too fast, may be checked, or when it goes on too slowly, may be encouraged, by the proper distribution of honors and marks of ignominy, and by the admonitions of the elders to prevent or promote it according to circumstances. Mr. John Stuart Mill evidently was of a similar opinion, and his followers have advocated State intervention as a cure for poverty. Plato also anticipated Mr. Darwin himself and the modern Darwinians, who lay such great and just stress on the

point of the rational selection of parents. In the fifth book of his "Republic," he proposes that the most healthy men should be joined in marriage to the finest specimens among the women, and the inferior citizens should be paired with each other. He next proposes that the children of the first class alone shall be brought up, the others not. It will doubtless be one of the results of the neo-Malthusian movement of this day, that persons afflicted with hereditary disease will not so often desire to become parents as the healthy, whilst they may follow the advice of Professor Mantegazza, of Florence, and "marry, but not procreate."

From these and other passages it is clear that Plato well saw the tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence. His expedients for checking it were not permissible, indeed, but the extent to which they were to be used shows how great he perceived the difficulty to be. How backward most modern nations are in speculation on such points may be judged of by the unwillingness in Germany, England, and even in France to look the question fairly in the face. In Plato's time wars were nearly perpetual, and very destructive, and if, whilst knowing this, he could still contemplate the destruction of the children of the poorer and sicker of the population, of all who were born when their parents were either too young or too old, the fixing of the date of marriage late, and the regulating the number of marriages, his reasonings and experience must have pointed out to him the terrible tendency of population to over-pass the means of subsistence.

The great writer, Aristotle, seems to have seen the principle even more clearly than Plato. He fixes the age of marriage for men in his Republic actually at thirty-seven; and, even with this late marriage, he foresaw that there might be too many children, so that he proposed that the number allowed to each marriage should be regulated. Aristotle accuses Plato of not being sufficiently attentive to the population difficulty, and for proposing to equalise property without limiting the number of children (*De Repub.* lib. ii. ch. vi.). This may be a hint to modern Socialists, especially to those of Germany, where Socialism seems to be becoming the creed of the masses, in despair at ever hearing any good thing from the military despots now in power. Aristotle justly observes that the laws require to be much more definite and precise in a state where property is equalised, than in others, since, in ordinary circumstances, an increase of population would only occasion a further subdivision of landed property, whereas, in a state of communism,

the supernumeraries would be altogether destitute, because the lands, being reduced to equal elementary parts, would be incapable of further sub-division. He remarks that it is necessary in all cases to regulate the number of children, so that they may not exceed the proper number. In doing this, death and sterility are of course to be taken into account. But if, he says in chapter vii., every person be left free to have as many children as he pleases, the necessary consequence will be poverty: and poverty is the mother of crime and sedition. For these very reasons, an ancient writer on politics, Pheidon of Corinth, introduced a regulation to limit population without equalising wealth.

Speaking again, in book ii. ch. vii., of schemes for the equalisation of wealth, Aristotle says that, in order that such schemes should be successful, it would be imperative to regulate at the same time the size of families. For, if children multiply beyond the means of supporting them, the law will necessarily be broken, and families will be suddenly reduced from opulence to beggary, a revolution always dangerous to public tranquillity. In Sparta the landed property had passed into the hands of a very small number of the citizens: and Aristotle remarks that in such a state the encouragement of large families by rewards could only have for its effect to cause an immense accumulation of indigence, so long as a better distribution of the land were not secured. It would have been well for European nations up to this time, had their rulers known even as much as Aristotle and Plato of this matter: they would have avoided those disastrous historical incentives to procreation, which must always have ended only in increasing indigence and premature death.

The positive checks to population in ancient Greece and Rome are palpable enough. Incessant wars, plagues, and famines prevailed. Livy expresses his surprise that the Volci and Æqui, who were so often destroyed by the Romans, should have been able to bring fresh armies into the field, but when the principle of population is understood, our astonishment ceases. Such conquered tribes, like the ancient Germans, doubtless gave full scope to the powers of procreation, and hence were soon as numerous as before their defeat. And yet it seems clear that the horrible practice of infanticide was very common in Italy, for Romulus was supposed already to have forbidden it, though the constant warfare of the Romans must have lessened the necessity for this check. The Roman population of Italy soon fell off when the land passed into the

hands of a few great proprietors, since the other classes, having no means of selling their labour, or competing with the numerous slaves of the wealthy, would have been entirely starved, had it not been for the curious custom which arose of distributing large quantities of corn gratis to the poorer or landless citizens. No less than two hundred thousand were thus fed in Augustus' reign, and probably had little else to depend upon. Hence the poorer free citizens could not increase, and they are said to have been constantly in the habit of exposing their unfortunate children, since the quantity of food doled out was not enough for a family to subsist upon.

The *jus trium liberorum* (law for rewarding fathers of three children) could effect nothing in such circumstances, in making the poor give birth to large families, although it may occasionally have tempted the landed proprietors to increase their families. Had the poor had large numbers of children in such a miserable state of society, they must have been born only to die of starvation, since the food doled out by the Government was not sufficient to feed all.

Positive laws to encourage marriage, says Mr. Malthus, enacted on the urgency of the occasion, and not mixed with religion, as in China and some other countries, are seldom calculated to answer the end they aim at, and therefore generally indicate ignorance in the legislator who proposes them; but the apparent necessity of them almost always indicates a very great degree of moral and political depravity in the State; and in the countries in which they are most strongly insisted on, not only vicious manners will be found to prevail, but political institutions extremely unfavourable to industry, and, consequently, to population.

On this account Malthus entirely disagreed with Hume, who supposed that the Roman world was probably most populous during the long peace under Trajan and the Antonines. Wars, he says, do not depopulate much while industry continues in vigour: and peace will not increase the number of people when they cannot find means of subsistence. "The renewal of the laws relating to marriage under Trajan indicates the continued prevalence of vicious habits, and of a languishing industry, and seems to be inconsistent with the supposition of a great increase of population."

Hume also thought that the population of the ancient world was greater than in modern times, because, he said, there were hosts of domestic servants in modern States remaining unmarried. But the contrary inference, says Malthus, seems to be

the more probable. When the difficulties attending the rearing of a family are very great, and, consequently, many persons of both sexes remain single, we may naturally suppose that the population is stationary, but by no means that it is not absolutely great; because the difficulty of rearing a family may arise from the very circumstance of a very great absolute population, and the consequent fulness of all the channels to a livelihood; though the same difficulty may undoubtedly exist in a thinly peopled country, which is yet stationary in its population.

The number of unmarried persons in proportion to the whole number, says Malthus, may form some criterion by which we may judge whether population is increasing, stationary, or decreasing; but will not enable us to determine anything respecting absolute populousness. Yet even in this point we may be deceived, since, in some southern countries early marriages are general, and very few women remain in a state of celibacy, yet the people not only do not increase, but the actual number is perhaps small. In this case the removal of the preventive check is made up by the excessive force of the positive check. The sum of all the positive and preventive checks taken together, forms, undoubtedly, the immediate cause which represses population; but we never can expect to obtain and estimate accurately this sum in any country; and we can certainly draw no safe conclusion from the contemplation of two or three of these checks taken by themselves, because it so frequently happens that the excess of one check is balanced by the defect of some other.

Causes which affect the number of births or deaths may or may not affect the average population, according to circumstances; but causes which affect the production and distribution of the means of subsistence must necessarily affect population; and it is therefore on these causes, besides actual enumerations, on which we can with any certainty rely. "All the checks to population, which have been hitherto considered in the course of this review of human society, are clearly resolvable into moral restraint, vice, and misery."

With regard, then, to the checks to population in ancient Rome, Mr. Malthus thinks that moral restraint acted but feebly in restraining the increase of numbers. And of the other branch of the preventive check, which comes under the denomination of "vice," according to Mr. Malthus, though its effect seems to have been very considerable in the later periods of Roman history and in some other countries; yet, on the

whole, he thinks its operation was much inferior to the positive checks. A large portion of the procreative power was called into action among the Romans, the redundancy being checked by violent causes, among which war was the most prominent and striking, and after which came famines and violent diseases.

In most of these ancient nations the population seems to have been seldom measured accurately according to the average and permanent means of subsistence, but generally to have vibrated between the two extremes, and therefore the contrasts between want and plenty were strongly marked, as might be expected in the earlier and less experienced ages of human society.



## CHAPTER IV.

## CHECKS TO POPULATION IN MODERN EUROPE.

BOOK ij. of Malthus' Essay treats of the checks to population in the different States of modern Europe,—Norway, Sweden, Russia, Germany, Switzerland, France, Great Britain, and Ireland. In Malthus' day, Norway seems to have been, perhaps, the most prosperous country in Europe; and it was distinguished by the great healthiness of its people. The death-rate he puts down as only one in 48, in a population of about three-quarters of a million.

With such a very low *positive* check, Malthus at once looked for the existence of a very high *preventive* check; and found this to be present in the very small proportion of marriages (one in 130) taking place annually in Norway.

There were, then as now, no large manufacturing towns in Norway to take away the overflowing population of the country; and, hence, as emigration was not then in vogue, the Norwegian peasant seldom left the village he was born in. Until, then, some married person died, there was usually no place for another marriage to take place. "In countries more fully peopled (says Malthus) this subject is always involved in great obscurity. Each man naturally thinks that he has as good a chance of finding employment as his neighbour, and that if he fail in one place he shall succeed in another. He marries, therefore, and trusts to fortune: and the effect too frequently is, that the redundant population occasioned in this manner is repressed by the positive checks of poverty and disease."

It is without doubt, says our author, owing to the preventive check to population, as much as to any peculiar healthiness of air, that the mortality of Norway is so low. In every country the principal mortality takes place among very young children; and the smaller number of these in Norway, in proportion to the whole population, will naturally occasion a smaller mortality than in other countries, supposing the climate to be equally healthy.

The population of Norway is now about 1,800,000, a very large accession since the days of Malthus, and there has of



late years been a very large emigration from that country to the United States, which indicates that, in all probability, there will soon be less of prudential restraint in the matter of births, and hence, doubtless, a higher death-rate than at the commencement of this century. The former low death-rate of Norway, one in 48, is not attained to at present by almost any European State except Norway. It is little more than 20 per 1000 per annum.

Malthus mentions in his work that Norway is almost the only country in Europe where a traveller will hear any apprehensions expressed of a redundant population, and where the danger to the happiness of the lower classes of people from this cause, is in some degree seen and understood. "This obviously arises from the smallness of the population altogether and the consequent narrowness of the subject. If our attention were confined to one parish, and there were no power of emigrating from it, the most careless observer could not fail to remark that, if all married at twenty, it would be perfectly impossible for the farmers, however carefully they might improve their land, to find employment and food for those that would grow up; but when a great number of these parishes are added together in a populous kingdom, the largeness of the subject and the power of moving from place to place obscure and confuse our view. We lose sight of a truth which before appeared completely obvious; and in a most unaccountable manner attribute to the aggregate quantity of land a power of supporting people beyond comparison greater than the sum of all its parts."

In Sweden, in Mr. Malthus' day, the inhabitants of the towns were only one-thirtieth part of the whole population; and the mortality, when Malthus wrote, seems to have been as high as one in 35. The proportion of yearly marriages he found, in Sweden, to be about one in 112: varying from one in 100, in good years, to one in 124, in bad ones. When it is remembered that the marriage-rate in Norway was but one in 135, against one in 112 in Sweden, the reason of the high death-rate is at once explained.

As usual, in Europe at that time, however, Swedish legislators were in the habit of endeavouring to increase population in all sorts of foolish ways, as, for instance, by encouraging strangers to settle in the country. Malthus remarks that, by doing so, the Government of Sweden was merely raising the already high death-rate, and not really increasing the population at all.

According to the economist, Cantzlaer, the principal measures in which the Government had been employed for the encouragement of the population were the establishment of Colleges of Medicine, and of Lying-in and Foundling Hospitals. Malthus remarks, that "the example of the hospitals of France may create a doubt whether such establishments are universally to be recommended. Foundling hospitals, whether they attain their professed object or not, are, in every view, hurtful to the State."

The population of Sweden, in 1751, was 2,229,000. It is now 4,400,000. There has recently been, as from Norway, a very large emigration from that State to America. "The sickly periods in Sweden (says Malthus) which have retarded the increase of its population, appear in general to have arisen from the unwholesome nourishment occasioned by severe want. And this want has been caused by unfavourable seasons falling upon a country which was without any reserved store, either in its general exports, or in the liberal division of food to the labourer in common years, and which was therefore peopled up to its produce before the occurrence of the scanty harvest. Such a state of things is a clear proof that if, as some of the Swedish economists assert, their country ought to have a population of nine or ten millions, they have nothing further to do than to make it produce food sufficient for such a number, and they may rest perfectly assured that they will not want mouths to eat it, without the assistance of lying-in and foundling hospitals."

With regard to the State of Russia at the beginning of this century, Malthus has left us a most interesting account derived from queries made during his travels in that country. At that date, the births in some parts of Russia were, to the deaths, according to Russian statistics, nearly as three to one. This reminds us moderns of 1879, of the birth and death-rate of our happy colony of New Zealand, where in 1877, there was the prodigious birth-rate of 41 per 1000, with the very low death-rate of only 12·4. Russian mortality, in Malthus' time, must have been very low indeed; and Mr. Tooke, in his *View of the Russian Empire*, published about that time, made out that the general mortality in Russia was one in 58 of the population annually. This is incredible, we think, in such an uncivilised State as Russia then was.

The birth-rate in Russia was, at that date, about 40 per 1,000, or similar to that of New Zealand. The marriage-rate (one in 90) was vastly higher than that of Norway (one in

130), so that the population of Russia was evidently increasing most rapidly at that time. If we are to give any credit to the healthiness of Russia in Malthus' time, it is clear that the city of Saint Petersburg was an exception to it, for the half of all persons born there lived only till the age of 25.

With regard to foundling hospitals, Mr. Malthus' visit to the renowned Russian State hospitals of this description, has often been quoted, and deserves to be attentively studied by all who speak of the question of illegitimacy and charity. Malthus found the mortality in the *Maison des Enfants trouvés* prodigious. One hundred deaths a month was a common average. The average number of children taken into this charity was at that time ten daily, and the death-rate terrible and heart-rending. Children were taken in and no questions asked from the mothers, but were handed over to nurses, and given back to their parents at any time when they could prove themselves able to support them.

The country nurses to whom these unfortunate children were given were paid only some fifteen-pence a week, and the children were received into that hospital without any limit. The children returned from the country (when they did return, for most of them died), at the age of six or seven; and the girls left the charity at 18, the boys at 20. The excessive mortality of the London Foundling Hospital of former days, caused it to be forced almost entirely to close its doors; and to become, what it now is, one of the many useless charities and shams of the metropolis of Mr. Malthus' native land.

Mr. Malthus also speaks of the great mortality of the Moscow Foundling Hospital, which was instituted in 1786, as follows: "It appears to me that the greatest part of this mortality is clearly to be attributed to these institutions, miscalled 'philanthropical.' If any reliance can be placed on the accounts given of the infant mortality in the Russian towns and provinces, it would appear to be unusually small. The greatness of it, therefore, in the foundling hospitals, may justly be laid to the account of the institutions which encourage a mother to desert her child, at the very time when, of all others, it stands most in need of her fostering care. The frail tenure by which an infant holds its life will not allow of a remitted attention, even for a few hours."

Foundling Hospitals, it is clear, in Paris, Vienna, and in all countries, tend to cause women to become thoughtless and heartless. Malthus, indeed, makes a remark which we have recently heard paralleled in Vienna. "An English merchant.

at Saint Petersburg told me that a Russian girl, living in his family, under a mistress who was considered as very strict, had sent six children to the Foundling hospital, without the loss of her place. And with regard to the moral feelings of a nation, it is very difficult to conceive that they must not be very sensibly impaired by encouraging mothers to desert their offspring, and endeavouring to teach them that their love for their new-born infants is a prejudice, which it is the interest of their country to eradicate."

Malthus mentions that the population of Russia, in 1796, was 36,000,000. At present it is computed at eighty-five and a half millions, only seven millions of which is found in Asia, and the rest in Europe.

A Government that had a true sense of what was advantageous for its subjects would, instead of offering *encouragements* to population, and incentives to thoughtlessness on the part of parents, such as foundling hospitals and other charities, encourage, by all means in its power, the feeling of parental responsibility among all classes. To do this, the most direct way would be, to show by some slight fine on the production of large families, that there is no possibility of attaining comfort and a low death-rate without *conjugal prudence*.

In Chapter ix. of Book ii., Malthus treats on the Checks to Population in the Middle parts of Europe at the beginning of this century. He makes the observation that there are few countries where the poorer classes have so much foresight as to defer marriage till they have a fair prospect of being able to support properly all their children: and in all countries, he adds, a great mortality, whether arising from the too great frequency of marriage, or occasioned by the number of towns and the natural unhealthiness of the situation, will necessarily produce a great frequency of marriage.

In Holland, in the registers of twenty-two villages, Sussemilch noted one marriage to every 64 persons living, the usual rate being about 1 in 120. Malthus says he was for some time puzzled at this high annual marriage rate, until he found that the mortality in these villages was actually 45 per 1,000 of the population. The extraordinary number of marriages was merely produced by the rapid dissolution of the old marriages by death, and the consequent vacancy of some employment by which a family might be supported. In Norway the mortality in his day was only 22 per 1,000, and the annual marriage rate 1 in 130. This is a notable contrast with the figures relating to Holland just quoted.

Of late years the birth and death-rate in Holland have been much more satisfactory than they were in the days of Malthus: but the extreme poverty of the working classes in South, as compared with North-Holland, has been recently shown by Mr. S. Van Houten to result in a far higher birth-rate and death-rate in the districts adjoining Rotterdam, than occurs among the more prudent and well-fed inhabitants of Groningen. Still, there have been years quite recently in Holland, when the death-rate has been as high as 29 per 1,000 (1871) and even as lately as 1875 it was 25 per 1,000.

The standard of comfort has greatly changed in several cities in Germany. Thus, in Leipsig, Malthus mentions that, in 1620, the annual marriage-rate was 1 in 82: whilst it fell in 1756 to 1 in 120. He observes that, in countries which have long been fully peopled, and in which no new sources of subsistence are opening, the marriages being regulated principally by the deaths, will generally bear nearly the same proportion to the whole population, at one period as another. In Berlin, at the commencement of this century, the annual marriage-rate was 1 in 110, whilst it was 1 in 137 at Paris. Berlin, then as now, was probably a very unhealthy city. The death-rate of infants there at present is said to amount to one-half of all born in the first year of life in some years.

Direct encouragements to marriage are, says Malthus, either perfectly futile, or produce a marriage when there is no place for one, thus increasing the mortality. Montesquieu, Süssmilch, and other authors thought that princes and statesmen would really merit the name of fathers of their people, if from the proportion of 1 in 120—125, they could increase the marriages to the proportion of 1 in 80 or 90. But, says Malthus, as this would greatly raise the death-rate and the poverty in the State, such princes would more justly deserve the title of destroyers of the people. Had Mr. Malthus lived in our day, he would have been aware that a high marriage-rate is not by any means necessarily followed by a high birth-rate, since, in modern France, where there are the greatest number of married women in proportion to population, over the age of 15, of any European state, the birth-rate is *lower* than in any other European state. But, in Malthus' day, human beings were still dominated greatly by instinct, and had not begun to allow reason to prevail in the most important of all human acts, that which leads to the addition of new members to society.

Mr. Malthus mentions that it had been calculated in his time

that, when the proportion of the people in towns in any State was to those in the country as 1 to 3, then the mortality was about 28 per 1,000, rising to 32 in 1,000, when the proportion of townsmen to countrymen was as 3 to 7; and falling below 28 per 1,000 when the townsmen are to the countrymen as 1 to 4. This holds true in principle in modern times: and it is out of the question to expect to have the death-rate of large cities as low as it is in country districts inhabited by well-fed peasants.

In chapter vi. our author speaks of the checks to population in Switzerland. From statistics existing in Geneva, it seems that in that town, during the sixteenth century, the probability of life, or the age to which half of those born live, was only 4.88, or rather less than 5; and the mean life was about  $18\frac{1}{2}$  years. In the seventeenth century the probability of life was  $11\frac{1}{4}$ , and the mean life  $23\frac{1}{4}$ . In the eighteenth century the probability of life had increased to 27, and the mean life to 32.

M. Muret, a Swiss clergyman of Vevey, in the eighteenth century, mentions the case of a village called Leyzin, with a population of 400 persons, where there were only eight births a year. The probability of life in this model parish appeared to be so extraordinarily high as to reach 61 years. And the average number of the births having been for 30 years almost accurately equal to the number of deaths, clearly proved that the habits of the people had not led them to emigrate, and that the resources of the parish for the support of the population had remained nearly stationary. As the marriages in this parish would, with few exceptions, be very late, it is evident that a very large proportion of the subsisting marriages would be among persons so far advanced in life that the women had ceased to bear. The births were only about 1 in 49 of the population or much fewer than in France of modern days (1 in 40). In England they are 1 in 28 of the population at present.

M. Muret made some calculations at Vevey respecting the fecundity of marriages. He found that 375 mothers had produced 2,093 children: *i.e.*, about six children each: and he also found that there were 20 sterile women out of 478, or about 1 in 23 wives. Taking this into account, the average number of children to a family at Vevey was  $5\frac{1}{2}$ . In modern France it is about 3, in Prussia 4.68, and in England about  $4\frac{1}{4}$ . In those days, the proportion of annual marriages to population was lower in the Canton de Vaud than even in Norway, being only 1 in 140. In the model village of Leyzin

only one-fifth of the total mortality was among persons under fifteen. Such were the results of what Mr. Malthus considered as the only true "moral restraint," late marriages. All these calculations of M. Muret imply the operation of the preventive check to population in a very great degree in the Canton de Vaud. In the town of Berne, the proportion of unmarried persons, including widows and widowers, was considerably above the half of the adults, and the proportion of the living below sixteen to those above was nearly as 1 to 3 in the beginning of this century. The peasants in Berne were noted for comfort and wealth, doubtless owing to the low birth-rate in that country. A law there prevented those who had no means from marrying.

Mr. Malthus gives an amusing account of a conversation he had with a peasant who went with him from the Lac de Joux to the sources of the river Orbe. This man said that the habit of early marriage might be really said to be the vice of the country: and he was so strongly impressed with the necessary and unavoidable wretchedness that must result from it, that he thought a law ought to be made restricting men from entering into the married state before they were forty years of age, and then allowing it only with old maids, who might bear them two or three children instead of six or eight. That peasant would have been, we doubt not, one of the most zealous advocates of the *two children system*, so wonderfully carried out in many of the most flourishing districts of France, and probably would have abandoned all desire to keep prudent couples like those in these French districts from marrying. We hold with that simple peasant of the Jura, who had learnt the truths he expounded by sad and cruel experience, he having married himself when very young, and with his family, suffered much from poverty, that governments are culpable when they do not attempt to lessen high birth-rates. To forbid early marriage, indeed, is to encourage prostitution and cause many other evils; but to affix a stigma on those who produce large families is, as far as we can see, a plan which can only produce good and need produce no evil results. It is an utter misunderstanding of the rights of the individual to suppose that each man and woman ought to have the *right* to cause misery to their unfortunate children, and at the same time produce a pressure upon the powers of the soil and lessen the productive powers of past and present labour. That this will ere long be seen to be the truth arising out of the discoveries of the great English professor we cannot for a moment doubt.

## CHAPTER V.

## OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN FRANCE.

**I**N the sixth chapter of Book II., Mr. Malthus gives us some account of the checks to population which existed in France at the end of last century, which might convince the most sceptical of modern pessimists of the vast strides which a nation may take in a short period towards the attainment of comfort and well-being.

The population of France, before the beginning of the war, says Malthus, was estimated by the Constituent Assembly at  $26\frac{1}{4}$  millions. Necker estimated the yearly births, in 1780, to be above a million, and it is curious, as we shall soon see, that France, in 1874, had not a million of births with a population of 36 millions. Malthus estimated that, out of that million, 600,000 would attain the age of 18; and, considering that nearly as many persons are to be found in a given society, unmarried as married, he amply accounts for the seeming paradox that, whilst France was supposed to have lost  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions by actual war and its consequences, at the time of the Revolution, the population was found to have increased, in 1800, as compared with 1790.

"At all times," says Malthus, "the number of small farmers and proprietors in France was great: and though such a state of things is by no means favourable to the clear surplus produce or disposable wealth of a nation, yet sometimes it is not unfavourable to the absolute produce, and it has always a tendency to encourage population." This last remark of Mr. Malthus has not been verified. In no country does the population tend to increase so slowly as in modern France—the *land par excellence* of peasant proprietors. In all probability, the rapid increase of population at the time of the French Revolution arose from the lower death-rate which always follows a sudden amelioration of the position of the humbler classes, such as that which took place where landed property came into their possession.

The average proportion of births to population in all France, before the Revolution was, according to Necker, 39 per 1000. It has singularly altered since that time, and is now only 26 per 1,000, or the lowest birth-rate in Europe. The death-rate



then was 33 per 1,000, and has fallen of late to 21 per 1,000, or nearly the lowest death-rate in Europe.

Sir Francis d'Ivernois, in a work entitled *Tableau des Pertes*, has the following remark: "Those have yet to learn the first principles of political arithmetic, who imagine that it is in the field of battle and the hospitals, that an account can be taken of the lives which a revolution or a war has cost. The number of men it has killed is of much less importance than the number of children which it has prevented, and will still prevent, from coming into the world." To this Mr. Malthus replies: "And yet if the circumstances on which the foregoing reasonings are founded should turn out to be true, it will appear that France has not lost a single birth by the revolution. She has the most just reason to mourn the two millions and a half of individuals which she may have lost, but not their posterity: because, if those individuals had remained in the country, a proportionate number of children born of other parents, which are now living in France, would not have come into existence. If in the best governed country in Europe we were to mourn the posterity which is prevented from coming into being, we should always wear the habit of grief."

"It is evident," he continues, "that the constant tendency of the births in every country to supply the vacancies made by death, cannot, in a moral point of view, afford the slightest shadow of excuse for the wanton sacrifice of men. The positive evil that is committed in this case, the pain, misery, and wide-spreading desolation and sorrow, that are occasioned to the existing inhabitants, can by no means be counterbalanced by the consideration that the numerical breach in the population will be rapidly repaired. We can have no other right, moral or political, except that of the most urgent necessity, to exchange the life of beings in the full vigour of their enjoyments for an equal number of helpless infants."

The next passage shows how immensely ameliorated is the condition of modern France, as compared with that before the Revolution. "At all times," says our author, "the number of males of a military age in France was small in proportion to the population, on account of the tendency to marriage (1 to 113 of the population, according to Necker), and the *great number of children*. Necker takes particular notice of this circumstance. He observes that the effect of the very great misery of the peasantry is to produce a dreadful mortality of infants under three or four years of age; and the consequence is that the number of young children will always be in too

great a proportion to the number of grown-up people. A million of individuals, he justly observes, will, in this case, neither present the same military force, nor the same capacity of labour, as an equal number of individuals in a country where the people are less miserable. Switzerland, before the Revolution, could have brought into the field, or have employed in labour appropriate to grown-up persons, one-third more in proportion to her population, than France at the same period."

How strikingly all this has been altered by the prudent habits with regard to families, induced by the peasant holdings in France, is clearly seen by the following statistics:—Between the ages of 20 and 60 the human frame is most capable of production, and, according to Kolb, there are in 10,000 persons in the several States in Europe the following numbers of persons of the productive ages: In France, 5,373; in Holland, 4,964; in Sweden, 4,954; in Great Britain, 4,732; and in the United States, 4,396. France has, of all nations in Europe, the highest average of ages of the living. Thus it is there 31·06 years; in Holland, 27·76; in Sweden, 27·66; in Great Britain, 26·56; and in the United States, 23·10. And in France there are a greater number of persons who attain to old age than in any other country, for, out of 100 deaths there are, in France, over the age of sixty, 36; in Switzerland, 34; in England, 30; in Belgium, 28; in Wurtemberg, 21; in Prussia, 19; and in Austria, 17.

But the most notable of all the facts of modern Europe is that marriages are more prevalent in proportion to population in France than elsewhere, and, curiously, there is the smallest number of illegitimate births. Thus, the illegitimate births in France were, from 1825-67, only 7·27 per cent. of all births, whilst in Prussia they were 8·24 per cent. in 1867; in Sweden they were 10 per cent.; in Austria, 11; and in Bavaria, in 1868, even 22 per cent. of all births. Paris is an exception to this, for the illegitimate births there are about one-fourth of all births.

France had, in 1867, a mortality of only 1 in 44·24 persons; whilst in Prussia the death-rate was 1 in 33·88, in Austria 1 in 29·72, in Holland 1 in 36·25, and in Bavaria 1 in 34·65 inhabitants. And here again is a striking contrast of modern France with the country of the days of Necker. France has now the lowest birth-rate of Europe. There is but one birth annually there in 39 inhabitants, whilst in Prussia there is one birth in 25·47; in Holland 1 in 29; in Austria 1 in

26; in England 1 in 28 inhabitants. According to an article by M. Bertillon on Marriage, in 1877, the average family to a marriage in France is at present only 3: against 4.68 in Germany, 3.96 in Russia, 4.35 in Spain, and 4.25 in England. This is what has been recently styled in Europe the "two (or rather three) Children System of the French." When we hear of the absurdly high birth-rate of 4.68 of Germany, need we wonder that the death-rate in many German towns sometimes amounts to one-half of all born in the first year of life?

France had, in 1872, a population of 36,102,921, and the number of births with this population (966,001) did not come up to what it was in the days of Necker, when the population was only 26½ millions. And whilst the population of the United Kingdom, according to our Registrar-General, is increasing at the rate of 1,173 a day, of which about 700 are left to swell the home population, the surplus of births over deaths in France is generally not much more than some 60,000 persons annually added to her population, so that it would take some 300 years for that country to double at its present rate.

As a consequence of our great birth-rate, 36 per 1,000, there is naturally a great emigration, amounting, as the Registrar-General tells us, to some 468 persons daily from these shores on an average, an emigration which, as it has been mainly masculine, has left us a surplus of nearly one million of women in these islands. In France there is no great need for emigration; and hence but little takes place; whilst, so contented are the peasant proprietors with their homes, that, in 1872, it was found that of the 36 millions of France 30½ millions were born within the registration districts. This fact accounts for the continuance of a Republic in France. Poverty is the cause of the ruin of Republics.

We add a few passages from a recent author to show how great a step has been taken by the inhabitants of many parts of France towards the removal of that terrible indigence which is found in most European countries, and even in less favoured districts in France.

In an article on Auvergne, written in 1874 and contained in his work entitled *Essays in Political and Moral Philosophy*, which appeared last year, Mr. Cliffe Leslie makes the following remarks: "The minute subdivision of land during the last 25 years in the Limagne, whatever may be its tendencies for good or evil in manners and other respects, assuredly cannot be ascribed to over-population, once regarded in England as the inevitable consequence of the French law of succession.

. . . . The Report of the *Enquête Agricole* on the department states: 'All the witnesses have declared that one of the principal causes of the diminution of the population is the diminution of children in families. Each family usually wishes for only one child; and when there are two, it is the result of a mistake (*une erreur*), or that having had a daughter first, they desire to have a son.' A poor woman near Royat, to whom I put some questions respecting wages and prices, asked whether my wife and children were there, or at one of the other watering places, and seemed greatly surprised that I had neither. She thought an English tourist must be rich enough to have several children; but when asked how many she had herself, she answered, with a significant smile, 'One lad; that's quite enough.' Our conversation at this point was as follows:—  
 'Votre dame et vos enfants, sont ils à Royat?' 'Non.' 'Ou donc? A Mont Dore?' 'Moi, je n'ai ni enfants ni femme.'  
 'Quoi! Pas encore?' 'Et vous, combien d'enfants avez-vous?'  
 'Un gars: c'est bien assez. Nous sommes pauvres, mais vous êtes riche. Cela fait une petite différence.' The translation of which is: 'Are your wife and children at Royat?' 'No.' 'Where then? At Mont Dore?' 'I have neither wife nor children.'  
 'What! Not yet?!' 'And you, how many children have you?' 'One boy: that is quite enough. We are poor, but you are rich. That makes a little difference.'

Mr. Leslie continues, p. 424: "If over-population gives rise to tremendous problems in India, the decline in the number of children in France seems almost equally serious. If two children are born to each married couple, a population must decline, because a considerable number will not reach maturity. If only one child be born to each pair, a nation must rapidly become extinct. The French law of succession is producing exactly the opposite effect to what was predicted in this country. Had parents in France complete testamentary power, there would not be the same reason for limiting the number of children. M. Leon Iscot, accordingly, in his evidence on this subject before the *Enquête Agricole* on the Puy-de-Dôme, said—'The number of births in families has diminished one half. We must come to liberty of testation. In countries like England, where testamentary liberty exists, families have more children.'"

Mr. Leslie puzzles us terribly. He recommends, in an essay on *The Celibacy of the Nation*, that the state of female celibacy should be greatly encouraged in all countries that desire to have happy marriages, but yet he is against the *two child*—

system of the French. Decidedly, Mr. Leslie has not thought out the question. He adds, on p. 424: "Whatever may be thought of the change which is taking place in France in respect of the numbers of the population, there is one change of which no other country has equal reason to be proud. Its agricultural population before the Revolution was in the last extremity of poverty and misery—their normal condition was half-starvation; they could scarcely be said to be clothed; their appearance in many places was hardly human. No other country in Europe, taken as a whole, can now show, upon the whole, so comfortable, happy, prosperous, and respectable a peasantry."

In an article on "Holidays in Eastern France, Seine et Marne," in *Fraser's Magazine*, September, 1878, we find this passage:—"We are in the midst of one of the wealthiest and best cultivated regions of France, and when we penetrate below the surface we find that in manners and customs, as well as dress and outward appearance, the peasant, and agricultural population generally, differ no little from their remoter fellow-countrymen, the Bretons. . . . There is no superstition, hardly a trace of poverty, and little that is poetic. The people are rich, laborious, and progressive. . . . It is a significant fact that in this well-educated district, where newspapers are read by the poorest, and where well-being is the rule and poverty a rare exception, the church is empty on Sunday and the priest's authority is *nil*."

"It is delightful to witness the widespread well-being of this highly-favoured region. 'There is no poverty here,' say my host and hostess, 'and that is why life is so pleasant. True enough! Wherever you go you find well-dressed contented-looking people—no rags, no squalor, no pinched want. . . . The habitual look of content written upon the faces you meet is very striking. It seems as if in this land of Goshen life were no burden, but matter of satisfaction only. Class distinctions can hardly be said to exist. There are employers and employed, masters and servants, of course; but the line of demarcation is lightly drawn, and we find an easy familiarity existing between them, wholly free from impoliteness, much less vulgarity. . . . One is struck, too, by the good looks, intelligence, and trim appearance of the children; who, it is clear, are well cared for. The houses have vines and sweet peas on the walls, flowers in the windows, and altogether a look of comfort and ease found nowhere in Western France. . . . Here order and cleanliness prevail, with a diffusion of well-being har-atched out of America. . . .

"Dirt is rare, I might almost say as unknown, as rags. . . . Drunkenness is also comparatively, in some places we might say absolutely, absent. As we make further acquaintance with these favoured regions, we might suppose that here, at least, the dreams of the Utopians had come true, and that poverty, squalor and wretchedness were banished for ever."

In the month of August, 1878, I had the great advantage of reading, in my capacity of Vice-President of the First Section of the International Congress of Hygiene at Paris, an essay on "The Too Rapid Increase of Population as a Cause of Disease and Death." In the debate which followed, Dr. Bertillon, the distinguished Professor of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, who has done so much for social statistics, said that he considered that in many parts of France there was too great a disinclination on the part of the people to increase the population. In Brittany, the marriages were few but very prolific, and the people were very poor. The influence of the priests was paramount in that province, and the mortality, both adult and infantile, great. There were very few children to a family in Normandy, and the death-rate was low in that province. The French Government he said, appeared to be acting according to the plan advised by the reader of the essay, since they taxed persons with large families as much as those with small ones. He admitted that the size of a family should be regulated by parental forethought; but thought that at present French population was too stationary.

Dr. Lagneau said, that in France it was the rich who had the smallest families, whilst the very poor often had large ones. The rich employés of Government, above all, were noted for the small size of their families. In the case of the peasant vine-growers of the Marne, many would only have one child, or even none at all, since these peasants found it difficult to get people to come from the town and help them with their farms, and had to do all the work by themselves. Hence, female labour was much in demand.

These facts will, doubtless, afford to many thoughtful persons a clear enough picture of the remarkable position of modern France, the only country in Europe which, as yet, seems to have begun fairly to grapple with the giant question of population

## CHAPTER VI.

ON THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN ENGLAND,  
SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND.

MR. MALTHUS, in the seventh chapter of his second book, speaks of the checks to population in England. He points out that a man of liberal education, with an income just sufficient to enable him to associate with educated people, must feel absolutely certain that, if he should marry and have a family, he will be obliged to mix in the society of uneducated persons. Such considerations make him pause. Sons of tradesmen and farmers are exhorted not to marry until settled in some business or farm, and the labourer who earns two shillings a day, and lives comfortably while single, will hesitate to divide that pittance among five! The servants of rich people have so many comforts that *they* naturally are averse to sink down to be the proprietors of some poor ale-house.

Hence, in Malthus' day (1806), the annual marriages in England and Wales were as 1 in 123 of the population, a smaller proportion than obtained in any European country at that time, except Norway and Sweden. Dr. Short, writing in 1750, proposed that single people should be heavily taxed for the support of the married poor. Mr. Malthus replies to this proposal of the learned judge, that it is not wise to ask people to enter the married state, so long as such crowds of children die in infancy and so much poverty exists among married persons. Those, he adds, who live single or marry late do not diminish the actual population by so doing. They merely prevent the proportion of premature mortality which would otherwise be excessive. Sir F. M. Eden mentioned that in some English villages the mortality seemed to be very low, viz. 1 in 47, or 21 per 1,000. London, in the beginning of this century, was, it seems, by no means so healthy as it is at present. According to a great authority, Dr. Price, the mortality was actually 60 per 1,000 (1 in 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ ), whilst at present it is about 23 per 1,000. At the same epoch, the Manchester death-rate was 1 in 21, or 35 per 1,000; so that Manchester was in those days much healthier than London. Manufactures, alas! however useful, are almost always most unwholesome, because they crowd hosts of people together without comfort, education, or forethought.

Mr. Malthus truly observes that "there certainly seems to be something in great towns, and even in moderate towns, peculiarly unfavourable to the very early stages of life." Towns, he adds, are especially dangerous to the life of children. "In London, according to former calculations, one half of the born died under three years of age; in Vienna and Stockholm under two; in Northampton under ten. In country villages, on the contrary, half the born live to thirty, forty, forty-six, and above." He adds that in parishes where the mortality is so small as 1 in 60 or 1 in 75, half the born would be found to have lived to 50 or 55. This is precisely the case among the members of the professional classes in England and Wales at this time, according to Mr. Charles Ansell's oft-quoted tables.

Dr. Short, it seems, estimated the birth-rate of England at 1 in 28, or 35 per 1,000. This is just about our present birth-rate. "It has hitherto," says our author, "been usual with political calculators to consider a great proportion of births as the surest sign of a vigorous and flourishing state. It is to be hoped, however, that this prejudice will not last long. In countries circumstanced like America, or in other countries after any great mortality, a large proportion of births may be a favourable symptom; but in the average state of a well-peopled territory, there cannot well be a worse sign than a large proportion of births, nor can there well be a better sign than a small proportion." This sentence ought to be written in letters of gold on the public monuments of all civilised States.

Sir Francis d'Ivernois, who is by no means always so wise, is cited by Malthus as writing as follows:—"If the various States of Europe kept and published annually an exact account of their population, noting carefully in a second column the exact age at which the children die, this second column would show the relative merit of the governments and the comparative happiness of their subjects. A single arithmetical statement would then perhaps be more conclusive than all the arguments that could be adduced."

Mr. Malthus speaks of the great difficulty that existed in former centuries of obtaining reliable information as to the numbers of the people. According to Davenant, he says, in 1690, the number of houses (in England and Wales) was 1,319,215. Allowing five persons to a house, this would give a population of six millions and a half in 1690; and it is quite incredible that from this time to 1710 the population should have diminished nearly a million and a half. So that the



estimated population of England and Wales in the latter year was said to have been only five millions.

In chapter eight of his second book, our author speaks of the checks to population in Scotland and Ireland. At the beginning of this century, as now, Scotland seems to have been one of the healthiest countries in Europe. Malthus mentions that in the parish of Crossmichael, in Kiroudbright, the mortality was given as one in 98, and the yearly marriages as one in 192 of the population. Mr. Wilkie stated that from the accounts of 36 parishes, the expectation of an infant's life appeared to be as high as 40.3. There can be little doubt that these figures are all, more or less, erroneous.

Mr. Malthus, writing in 1806, says that "in these parishes in Scotland, where manufacturing has been introduced, which offered employment to children as soon as they have reached their sixth or seventh year, a habit of marrying early naturally follows; and, while the manufacture continues to flourish and increase, the evil arising from it is not very perceptible; although humanity must confess with a sigh, that one of the reasons why it is not so perceptible is that room is made for fresh families by the unnatural mortality which takes place among the children thus employed." Mr. Van Houten gave a most eloquent variation of this theme at the meeting of the International Congress of Medical Men, at Amsterdam, in 1879, when he said that children should never be employed in industry:—"The child belongs to himself and to play. How many lives of children," he continued, "do we not wear out in our clothes, or smoke away in our cigars!"

Another writer in Malthus' day is astonished at the rapid increase of population in parts of Scotland, in spite of a considerable emigration to America in 1770, and a large drain during the war. In the parish of Duthie (Elgin) the annual births were  $\frac{1}{12}$  of the whole population, the marriages one in 55. Each marriage in this place was stated to yield seven children, and yet the population had decreased. The women of Scotland appeared in those days to have been very prolific. In the parish of Nigg (Kincardine) there were 57 families with 405 children—i.e., nearly  $7\frac{1}{2}$  each. Compare this with modern France, with an average of three children to a marriage. In Scotland at present the number of children to a marriage is about four.

The illustrious clergyman, Dr. Chalmers, whose centenary of birth was celebrated on March 7, 1880, was always greatly

averse to the introduction of the English poor-law system into Scotland. Mr. Malthus points out that before his day "the poor of Scotland were in general supported by voluntary contributions, distributed under the inspection of the minister of the parish; and it appears, upon the whole, that they have been conducted with considerable judgment. Having no claim by right to relief, and the supplies, from the mode of their collection, being necessarily uncertain, and never abundant, the poor have considered them merely as a last resource in cases of extreme distress, and not as a fund on which they might rely." In the account of Caerlaverock, in answer to the question, "How ought the poor to be supplied?" it is most judiciously remarked, "that distress and poverty multiply in proportion to the funds created to relieve them; that the measures of charity ought to remain invisible till the moment when it is necessary that they should be distributed; that in the country parishes of Scotland in general small occasional voluntary collections are sufficient; that the legislature has no occasion to interfere to augment the stream, which already is copious enough; in fine, that the establishment of a poor rate would not only be unnecessary, but hurtful, as it would tend to oppress the land-holder without bringing relief to the poor."

Chalmers preached these doctrines enthusiastically during his long and eventful life, and his conduct in moralising that part of the city of Glasgow where he was pastor will ever be remembered with gratitude by all lovers of human happiness.

The Poor-law Act of 1834, which was carried out in accordance with the views of Malthus and Chalmers, unfortunately placed no effectual check on the quantity of outdoor relief, and hence the number of outdoor paupers in England is often as high as one-eighth of all relieved. This demoralises and pauperises the English poor to an alarming extent. This Poor-law was introduced, with its worst features exaggerated, into Scotland in 1845, when a brand-new Poor-law was brought in with great facilities for outdoor relief. Well might Chalmers warn his countrymen against such a Poor-law. It has already pauperised the most interesting peasantry in the British Islands to such a degree that, whilst in England one out of every twenty persons is often a pauper, in Scotland already one in twenty-three are so, whereas in Ireland, with a far lower standard of comfort, but a much more stringent Poor-law, only one in seventy-four persons are in receipt of any parish relief.

"The endemic and epidemic diseases in Scotland," says Malthus, "fall chiefly, as is usual, on the poor. . . . To

the same causes, in a great measure, are attributed the rheumatisms which are general and the consumptions which are frequent among the common people. Wherever, in any place, from particular circumstances, the condition of the poor has been rendered worse, these disorders, particularly the latter, have been observed to prevail with greater force." In these observations Mr. Malthus lays the very foundation of the science of health. Health in Europe, he shows, is incompatible with high birth-rates, which cause over-crowding, consumption, and death.

Scotland, says Malthus, writing in 1806, is certainly still over-peopled, but not so much as it was a century ago, when it contained fewer inhabitants. Scotland in 1801, had 1,608,420 inhabitants, and in 1871, 3,360,018, so that its time of doubling has been nearly seventy years, or much slower than that of England and Wales.

With regard to Ireland, there is only one short paragraph in Malthus' tenth Chapter of Book Second upon that country. We give it in its entirety:—"The details of the population of Ireland are but little known. I shall only observe, therefore, that the extended use of potatoes has allowed of a very rapid increase of it during the last century (18th). But the cheapness of this nourishing root, and the small piece of ground which, under this cultivation, will in average years produce the food for a family, joined to the ignorance and barbarism of the people, which have prompted them to follow their inclinations with no other prospect than an immediate bare subsistence, have encouraged marriage to such a degree that the population is pushed much beyond the industry and present resources of the country; and the consequence naturally is that the lower classes of people are in the most depressed and miserable state. The checks to the population are, of course, chiefly of the positive kind, and arise from the diseases occasioned by squalid poverty, by damp and wretched cabins, by bad and insufficient clothing, by the filth of their persons, and occasional want."

Malthus here foresaw the famine of 1848, which, aided by emigration, reduced the Irish population from 8,175,124 in 1841 to 6,552,385 in 1851. Doubtless, as shown by Mr. J. S. Mill, Professor Laveleye, and other subsequent writers, the miserable condition of the Irish peasant is due mainly to the intolerable feudal laws of land tenure, which have been so violently put an end to in our happiest of modern European States, France.

## CHAPTER VII.

## DETACHED ESSAYS.

**I**N Volume II. of the "Essay on the Principle of Population" (edition 1806) there are to be found a number of most interesting remarks on the population question. Book II. contains chapters on the Fruitfulness of Marriage, on the Effects of Epidemics, on Registers of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, and on the General Deductions from the Preceding View of Society.

"There is no absolutely necessary connection," says Malthus, "between the average age of marriage and the average age of death. In a country the resources of which will allow of a rapid increase of population, the expectation of life or the average age of death may be extremely high, and yet the age of marriage may be very early; and the marriages, then, compared with the contemporary deaths of the registers, would, even after the correction for second and third marriages, be very much too great to represent the true proportion of the born living to marry."

At the commencement of this century, it appears from the transactions of the Society of Philadelphia, in a paper by Mr. Barton, entitled "Observations on the Probability of Life in the United States," that the proportion of marriages to births was as 1 to  $4\frac{1}{2}$ . As, however, this proportion was taken principally from towns, it is probable, according to Malthus, that the births given were too low, and that as many as five might be taken as an average for town and country. According to this author, the mortality at that date was about 1 in 45; and, if the population doubled in twenty-five years, the births would be 1 in 20 (50 per 1,000).

In England at the commencement of this century the proportion of marriages to births appears to have been about 100 to 350. But in those days Mr. Malthus calculated that the annual marriages to the births in England amounted to about 1 in 4. In the East-end of London at the present day the writer has found that the average number of children to a marriage among the women of the poorer classes is about 7, whilst the annual births in England and Wales to the mar-

riages are nearly as  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to 1. In France the annual marriages are to the births as 1 to 3.

A writer in Mr. Malthus's day, Crome, observes that when the marriages of a country yield less than four births, the population is in a very precarious state; and he estimates the prolificness of marriages by the proportion of yearly births to marriages. If this had been true, the population of many countries of Europe would be at present in a precarious state, since in many, as in France, the proportion of marriages to births is much under 4 to 1.

"The preventive check," says Malthus, "is perhaps best measured by the smallness of the proportion of yearly births to the whole population. The proportion of yearly marriages to the population is only a just criterion in countries similarly circumstanced, but is incorrect where there is a difference in the prolificness of marriages or in the proportion of the population under the age of puberty, and in the rate of increase. If all the marriages of a country, be they few or many, take place young, and be consequently prolific, it is evident that to produce the same proportion of births a smaller number of marriages will be necessary, or, with the same proportion of marriages, a greater proportion will be produced."

Curiously enough, in his day Malthus mentions that in France both the births and deaths were greater than they were in Sweden, although the proportion of marriages was then rather less in France. "And when," he adds, "in two countries compared, one of them has a much greater part of its population under the age of puberty than the other, it is evident that any general proportion of the yearly marriages to the whole population will not imply the same operation of the preventive check among those of a marriageable age."

One of the most interesting chapters in the second volume of Malthus' essay is that which relates to the rapid increase of births after the plagues. According to Sussmilch, very few countries had hitherto been exempt from plagues, which every now and then would sweep away one-fourth or one-third of their population. That writer calculated that above one-third of the people in Prussia were destroyed by the plague of 1711; and yet, notwithstanding this great diminution of the population, it appeared that the number of marriages in 1711 was very nearly double the average of the six years preceding the plague. Hence the proportion of births to deaths was prodigious—320 to 100—an excess of births as great, perhaps, as has ever been known in America. In the four years succeed-

ing the plague the births were to the deaths in the proportion of above 22 to 10, which, calculating the mortality at 1 in 36, would double the population in 21 years.

"In contemplating," says Malthus, "the plagues and sickly seasons which occur in the tables of Susmilch, after a period of rapid increase, it is impossible not to be struck with the idea that the number of inhabitants had, in these instances, exceeded the food and accommodation necessary to preserve them in health. The mass of the people would, upon this supposition, be obliged to live worse, and a greater number of them would be crowded together in one house; and these natural causes would evidently contribute to increase sickness, even though the country, absolutely considered, might not be crowded and populous. In a country even thinly inhabited, if an increase of population takes place before more food is raised, and more houses are built, the inhabitants must be distressed for room and subsistence."

In Chapter xi. we have some general deductions from the preceding views of Society. Mr. Malthus there shows that the main cause of the slow growth of populations in Europe is insufficiency of supplies of food. No settlements, says our author, could have been worse managed than those of Spain, Mexico, Peru and Quito. Yet, under all their difficulties, these colonies made a quick increase in population. But the English North American Colonies added to the quantity of rich land they held in common with the Spanish and Portuguese settlements, a greater degree of liberty and equality. In Pennsylvania there was no right of primogeniture in Malthus' time; and in the provinces of New England the eldest son had only a double share. The consequence of these favourable circumstances united was a rapidity of increase almost without a parallel in history. Throughout all the northern provinces the population was found to double itself in 25 years. The original number of persons which had settled in the four provinces of New England, in 1643, was 21,200. Afterwards it was calculated that more left them than went to them. In the year 1760 they were increased to half a million. They had, therefore, all along, doubled their numbers in 25 years. In New Jersey the period of doubling appeared to be 22 years; and in Rhode island still less. In the back settlements, where the inhabitants applied themselves solely to agriculture, and luxury was not known, they were supposed to double their numbers in 15 years.

The population of the United States, says Malthus, writing

in 1806, according to the last Census, is 11,000,000. "We have no reason to believe that Great Britain is less populous at present, for the emigration of the small parent stock which produced these numbers. On the contrary, a certain amount of emigration is known to be favourable to the population of the mother country. Whatever was the original number of British emigrants which increased so fast in North America, let us ask. Why does not an equal number produce an equal increase in the same time in Great Britain? The obvious reason is the want of food; and that this want is the most efficient cause of the three immediate checks to population which have been observed to prevail in all societies, is evident, from the rapidity with which even old States recover the desolations of war, pestilence, famine, and the convulsions of nature. They are then for a short time placed a little in the condition of new colonies, and the effect is always answerable to what might be expected. If the industry of the inhabitants be not destroyed, subsistence will soon increase beyond the wants of the reduced numbers; and the invariable consequence will be, that population, which before perhaps was nearly stationary, will begin immediately to increase, and will continue its progress till the former population is recovered."

The decennial censuses of the United States during this century have been as follows, in round numbers:—In 1800, 5,305,000; in 1810, 7,239,000; in 1820, 9,638,000; in 1830, 12,866,000; in 1840, 17,069,000; in 1850, 23,193,000; in 1860, 31,443,000; in 1870, 38,558,000. If we compare the cypher of 1830—12,866,000—with that of 1800—5,305,000—we see that the population of the States far more than doubled itself in the first thirty years of the century, making all due allowance for immigration, by the simple process of fecundity inherent in the human species.

Mr. Malthus mentions (chapter XI. p. 67), that in New Jersey "the proportion of births to deaths, in an average of seven years, ending 1743, was 300 to 100. In England and France, he says, at that time the highest average proportion could not be reckoned at more than 120 to 100." At this date, 1880, the proportion of births to deaths in France is as 111 is to 100, and in England it is as 152 is to 100, whereas in Dublin the deaths exceed the births. In New Zealand the births are to the deaths as 340 is to 100. There is nothing, he says, the least mysterious in this. "The passion between the sexes has appeared in every age to be so nearly the same, that it may be considered, in algebraic language, as a given

quantity. The great law of necessity which prevents population from increasing in any country beyond the food which it can either produce or acquire, is a law so open to our view, so obvious and evident to our understandings, that we cannot for a moment doubt it. The different modes which nature takes to repress a redundant population, do not appear, indeed, to us so certain and regular; but though we cannot always predict the mode, we may with certainty predict the fact. If the proportion of the births to the deaths for a few years indicates an increase of numbers much beyond the proportional increased or acquired food of the country, we may be perfectly certain that unless an emigration take place the deaths will shortly exceed the births, and that the increase that has been observed for a few years cannot be the real average increase of the population of that country. If there were no other depopulating causes, and if the preventive check did not act very strongly, every country would without doubt be subject to periodical plagues and famines."

This is a well-known passage, and shows the genius of the writer as well as any in his work. How immensely superior is his clear enunciation of the attraction between the sexes when compared with the strange speculations of Mr. Herbert Spencer of late years, about the supposed gradual decay of that attraction in proportion to the alleged increase in the weight of the human brain. It is quite deplorable to see what ingenuity has been exercised by latter-day philosophers to get over the plain and inevitable conclusions of Malthus and his common-sense school. The struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest has been put forward as a plea for allowing over-population to grind the masses in constant misery, and the delusive ideal of the equation of mouths to food in the course of ages by a mere fanciful tendency of organisms to become more perfect, without the exercise of volition, are the latest struggles of the ostrich to burrow with his head in the sand in order to avoid the sight of the inevitable.

"The only criterion," says Malthus, "of a real and permanent increase in the population of any country is the increase in the means of subsistence. But even this criterion is subject to slight variations, which, however, are completely open to observation. In some countries population seems to have been forced: that is the people have been habituated by degrees to live almost upon the smallest possible quantity of food. There must have been periods in such countries when population increased permanently without an increase in the



means of subsistence. China, India, and the countries possessed by the Bedoween Arabs, as we have seen in the former part of this work, appear to answer to this description. The average produce of these countries seems to be but barely sufficient to support the lives of the inhabitants, and, of course, any deficiency from the badness of the seasons must be fatal. Nations in this state must necessarily be subject to famines."

Almost all the histories of epidemics which we have read tend to confirm the supposition that they are greatly caused by that over-population which, as in Dublin in 1880, leads to over-crowded houses filled by ill-fed and ill-clad inmates. Dr. Short, an author of the last century, shows in his work (*Air, Seasons, &c.*, vol. ii. p. 206), that a very considerable proportion of the epidemic years either have followed or were accompanied by seasons of dearth and bad food. In other places he also mentions great plagues as diminishing particularly the numbers of the poorest classes; and in speaking of different diseases, he observes, that those which are occasioned by bad and unwholesome food generally last the longest.

"We know (says our author) from constant experience that fevers are generated in our jails, our manufactories, our crowded workhouses; and in the narrow and close streets of our large towns, all which situations appear to be similar in their effects to squalid poverty, and we cannot doubt that causes of this kind, aggravated in degree, contributed to the production and prevalence of those great and wasting plagues formerly so common in Europe, but which now, from the mitigation of their causes, are everywhere considerably abated, and in many places appear to be completely extirpated.

"Of the other great scourge of mankind—famine—it may be observed that it is not in the nature of things that the increase of population should absolutely produce one. This increase, though rapid, is necessarily gradual, and as the human frame cannot be supported, even for a very short time, without food, it is evident that no more human beings can grow up than there is provision to maintain. But though the principle of population cannot absolutely produce a famine, it prepares the way for one in the most complete manner, and by obliging all the lower classes of people to subsist merely on the smallest quantity of food that will support life, turns even a slight deficiency from the failure of the seasons into a severe dearth; and may be fairly said, therefore, to be one of

the principal causes of famine. Among the signs of an approaching dearth, Dr. Short mentions one or more years of luxuriant crops together, and this observation is probably just, as we know that the general effect of years of cheapness and abundance is to dispose a greater number of persons to marry, and under such circumstances the return to a year which gives only an average crop might produce a scarcity."

Much has been lately spoken in professional assemblies about recent epidemics of small pox. It is curious to hear what our author, writing in 1806, or seven years after the discovery of Edward Jenner, has to say. "The small pox (says Malthus, book 2, ch. xi., p. 61), which at present may be considered as the most prevalent and fatal epidemic in Europe, is of all others, perhaps, the most difficult to account for, though the periods of its return are in many places regular. Dr. Short (*Air, Seasons*, vol. ii., p. 441), observes that from the history of this disorder it seems to have very little dependence on present constitutions of the weather of seasons, and that it appears epidemically at all times and in all states of the air, though not so frequently in hard frost. We know of no instances, I believe, of its being clearly generated under any circumstances of situation. I do not mean, therefore, to insinuate that poverty and crowded houses ever absolutely produced it; but I may be allowed to remark that in those places where its returns are regular, and its ravages among children, particularly among those of the lowest class, are considerable, it necessarily follows that these circumstances, in a greater degree than usual, must always precede and accompany its appearance; that is, from the time of its last visit, the average number of children will be increasing, the people will, in consequence, be growing poorer, and the houses will be more crowded till another visit removes this superabundant population."

Other circumstances being equal, it may be affirmed that countries are populous according to the quantity of human food which they produce or can acquire; and happy, according to the liberality with which the food is divided, or the quantity which a day's labor will purchase. Compare, on this standard of our author, the condition of an agricultural laborer in England, with beefsteak at one shilling the pound in London, with that of Dunedin, where, as we write, it is at fourpence the pound, and wages are at least two and a half those in England for that class. "Corn countries are more populous than pasture countries; and rice countries more

populous than corn countries. But their happiness does not depend either upon their being thinly or fully inhabited, upon their poverty or their riches, their youth or their age; but on the proportion which the population and the food bear to each other. This proportion is generally the most favorable in new colonies, where the knowledge and industry of an old state operate on the fertile unappropriated land of a new one. In other cases the youth or the age of a state is not, in this respect, of great importance. It is probable that the food of Great Britain is divided in more liberal shares to its inhabitants at the present period than it was two thousand, three thousand, or four thousand years ago."

This passage from Malthus shows that he at least does not believe in the view sometimes attributed to him that the position of civilised society is tending continually to become more and more unbearable from pressure of population on food. Malthus saw quite clearly that the prevention of a rapid birth-rate was more and more practised by nations in proportion as they became better educated, and he therefore did not at all take the pessimistic aspect of human society that many believe.

"In a country never to be overrun by a people more advanced in arts, but left to its own natural progress in civilisation; from the time when its produce might be considered as a unit, to the time that it might be considered as a million, during the lapse of many thousand years, there would not be a single period when the mass of the people could be said to be free from distress, either directly or indirectly, from want of food. In every state in Europe, since we have first had accounts of it, millions and millions of human existences have been suppressed from this simple cause, though perhaps in some of these states an absolute famine may never have been known."

These expressions of Mr. Malthus are entirely opposed to the idea that he held that the future of society was likely to be less bright than that of the past. Still there is a certain sadness in the following sentence, which is the real secret of the unpopularity of the great discoverer's doctrine. In page 73, book ii., chap. xi., he says: "Population invariably increases when the means of subsistence increase, unless prevented by powerful and obvious checks. . . . Famine seems to be the last, the most dreadful resource of nature. The power of population is so superior to the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man, that unless arrested by the preventive

check, premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race. The vices of mankind are active and able ministers of depopulation. They are the precursors in the great army of destruction, and often finish the dreadful work themselves. But should they fail in this work of extermination, sickly seasons, epidemics, pestilence, and plague, advance in terrific array, and sweep off their thousands and tens of thousands. Should success be still incomplete, gigantic, inevitable famine stalks in the rear, and at one mighty blow levels the population with the food of the world."

In Mr. Malthus's edition of 1806, the third book contains several essays on the different systems or expedients which have been proposed or have prevailed in society, as they affect the evils arising from the principle of population. In chapter I., p. 77, he treats of systems of equality proposed by Wallace, and the illustrious Condorcet. Mr. Wallace, whose name has been adverted to by many writers as one of those who partly saw the importance of the tendency of mankind to increase more rapidly than food, did not seem to be aware that any difficulty would arise from this cause till the whole earth had been cultivated as a garden, and was incapable of any further increase of produce. Mr. Malthus remarks upon this idea of Mr. Wallace, that "at every period during the period of cultivation, from the present moment to the time when the whole earth was become like a garden, the distress for want of food would be constantly pressing on all mankind if they were equal. Though the produce of the earth would be increasing every year, population would be tending to increase much faster, and the redundancy must necessarily be checked by the periodical action of moral restraint, vice, or misery."

M. Condorcet's *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* was written, it is said, under the pressure of that cruel proscription which terminated in his death during the French Revolution, and the posthumous publication is only a sketch of a much larger work which he proposed to write. By the application of calculations to the probabilities of life and the interest of money, Condorcet proposed that a fund should be established, which should assure to the old an assistance produced in part by their own former savings, and in part by the savings of individuals, who in making the same sacrifice die before they reap the benefit of it. These establishments, he observes, might be made in the name and under the protection of the state. Mr. Blackley brought forward a somewhat similar proposal in 1880. Condorcet adds that by

the just application of such calculations, means might be found of more completely preserving a state of equality, by preventing credit from being the exclusive privilege of large fortunes, and yet giving it a basis equally solid, and by rendering the industry and activity of commerce less dependent on great capitalists.

Mr. Malthus criticises the schemes of Condorcet as follows:—  
“Supposing for a moment that they would give no check to production, the greatest difficulty remains behind. Were every man sure of a comfortable provision for a family, almost every man would have one; and were the rising generation free from the killing frost of misery, population must increase with unusual rapidity.” And Condorcet himself saw this, for he says: “But in this progress of industry and happiness, each generation will be called to more extended enjoyments, and, in consequence, by the physical constitution of the human frame, to an increase in the number of individuals. Must not there arise a period when these laws, equally necessary, shall counteract each other; when the increase of the number of men surpassing their means of subsistence, the necessary result must be, either a continual diminution of happiness and population—a movement truly retrograde—or, at least, a kind of oscillation between good and evil. Shall we ever arrive at such a period? It is equally impossible to pronounce for or against the future realization of an event, which cannot take place but at an era when the human race will have attained improvements of which we can at present scarcely form a conception.”

To this Mr. Malthus replies that the only point in which he differs from Condorcet in the paragraph just cited is with regard to the period when it may be applied to the human race. Condorcet thought that his age of iron would not come until a very distant era. Our author remarks, on the contrary, that the period when the number of men surpassed their subsistence had long ago arrived; and that this constantly subsisting cause of periodical misery has existed ever since we have any history of mankind, and continues to exist at the present moment.

“M. Condorcet (says Malthus) however goes on to say that should the period which he conceives to be so distant ever arrive, the human race, and the advocates of the perfectibility of man, need not be alarmed at it. He then proceeds to remove the difficulty in a manner which I profess not to understand. Having observed that the ridiculous prejudice of

superstition would by that time have ceased to throw over morals a corrupt and degrading austerity, he alludes either to a promiscuous concubinage which would prevent breeding, or to something else as unnatural. To remove the difficulty in this way will surely, in the opinion of most men, be to destroy that virtue and purity of manners which the advocates of equality, and of the perfectibility of man, profess to be the end and object of their views."

It is from passages such as these that Mr. Malthus differs so much from the so-called New-Malthusians, who look for the solution of the population difficulty to the "small-family system" of the French. It would seem that the great French writer, Condorcet, had a prophetic knowledge of what the effect of the great French Revolution would be, a revolution which, by converting the cultivator of the soil of that state into the proprietor, has made France the most prudent country in the known world in the question of the size of families. Mr. Bonar, too, in a clever pamphlet, published in 1880, shows that Mr. Malthus retained somewhat the same phraseology as he uses here, in his 7th edition, page 512, where he thus speaks: "If it were possible for each married couple to limit by a wish the number of their children, there is certainly reason to fear that the indolence of the human race would be very greatly increased." Had he lived in 1881, and seen how rapidly the industry of France is increasing, her wealth developing, and poverty diminishing in that happiest of modern European states in the face of the lowest European birth-rate (26 per 1,000), he would have been the first, we doubt not, to retract these crude expressions, and to see wherein true virtue consists.

M. Condorcet seems to have entertained some very hopeful ideas as to the perfectibility of the human frame, and to have thought that though man would not become absolutely immortal, yet that the duration between his birth and his natural death would increase without ceasing, would have no natural term, and might properly be expressed by the term indefinite. Malthus demurs to these speculations. He thinks that the average duration of human life will, to a certain extent, vary from healthy or unhealthy climates, from wholesome or unwholesome food, from virtuous or vicious manners, and from other causes; but it may be fairly doubted whether there has been really the smallest perceptible advance in the natural duration of human life since we had any authentic history of man. "What can we reason but from what we know?"

"The capacity of improvement in plants and animals, to a certain extent, no person can possibly doubt. A clear and decided progress has already been made, and yet I think that it would be highly absurd to say that this progress has no limits. . . . The error does not seem to lie in supposing a small degree of improvement possible, but in not discriminating between a small improvement, the limit of which is undefined, and an improvement really unlimited. As the human race could not be improved in the same way as the domestic animals, without condemning all the bad specimens to celibacy, it is not probable that an attention to breed should ever become general." Here, again, we prefer the injunction of Professor Mantegazza to consumptive parents: '*Amate, ma non generate*' ('Marry but do not reproduce'). The speculations of Condorcet seem, to a certain extent, to have been revived in modern days by Mr. H. Spencer and Dr. B. W. Richardson. The former of these distinguished authors seems to look forward to a time when the wants of mankind shall by the process of evolution become equated to their powers of acquiring food, without calling in the will; and Dr. Richardson seems to look forward to a far greater longevity for individuals of the human species than has been experienced in its past history.

"When paradoxes of this kind (says Malthus) are advanced by ingenious and able men, neglect has no tendency to convince them of their mistakes. Priding themselves on what they conceive to be a mark of the make and size of their own understandings, of the extent and comprehensiveness of their views, they will look upon this neglect merely as an indication of poverty and narrowness of the mental exertions of their contemporaries, and only think that the world is not yet prepared to receive their sublime truths. On the contrary, a candid investigation of these subjects, accompanied with a perfect readiness to adopt anything warranted by sound philosophy, may have a tendency to convince them that in forming unfounded and improbable hypotheses, so far from enlarging the bounds of science, they are contracting it; so far from promoting the improvement of the human mind, they are obstructing it; they are throwing us back again almost into the infancy of knowledge, and weakening the foundations of that mode of philosophising under the auspices of which science has of late made such rapid advance. The late rage for wide and unrestrained speculation seems to have been a kind of mental intoxication, arising perhaps from the great

and unexpected discoveries which had been made in various branches of science. To men elate and inspired with such successes, everything appears to be within the grasp of human powers, and under this illusion they confounded subjects where no real progress could be proved with those where the progress had been marked, certain and acknowledged."

The great antagonist of Mr. Malthus at the commencement of this century was Mr. Godwin, who, in his work on *Political Justice*, gives a magnificent picture of a system of equality, which, by his account, is to regenerate society. On page 458 of book IV. of that work Mr. Godwin thus speaks:—"The spirit of oppression, the spirit of servility, and the spirit of fraud, then, are the immediate growth of the established administration of property. They are alike hostile to intellectual improvement. The other vices of envy, malice, and revenge are their inseparable companions. In a state of society where men lived in the midst of plenty, and where all shared alike the bounties of nature, these sentiments would inevitably expire. The narrow principle of selfishness would vanish. No man being obliged to guard his little store, or provide with anxiety or pain for his restless wants, each would lose his individual existence in the thought of the general good. No man would be an enemy to his neighbours, for they would have no subject of contention; and, of consequence, philanthropy would resume the empire which reason assigns her. Mind would be delivered from her perpetual anxiety about corporeal support, and free to expatiate in the field of thought which is congenial to her. Each would assist the inquiries of all."

The great error, as Malthus observes, under which Mr. Godwin labors throughout his whole work is in attributing almost all the vices and miseries that prevail in civil society to human institutions. Political regulations, and the established administration of property, are, with him, the fruitful sources of all evil, the hotbed of all the crimes that degrade mankind. "Man cannot live (says Malthus) in the midst of plenty. All cannot share alike the bounties of nature. Were there no established administration of property, every man would be obliged to guard with force his little store. Selfishness would be triumphant. The subjects of contention would be perpetual. Every individual would be under a constant anxiety about corporeal support, and not a single intellect would be left free to expatiate in the field of thought."

Mr. Godwin supposed that the population difficulty would



only become of importance at some remote future. "Three-fourths of the habitable globe are now uncultivated. The parts already cultivated are capable of immeasurable improvement. Myriads of centuries of still increasing population may pass away, and the earth be still found sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants." Mr. Malthus asks us to imagine for a moment Mr. Godwin's system of equality realised in its utmost extent, and see how soon the difficulty of population might be expected to press upon us under so perfect a form of society.

Let us suppose, he says, all the causes of vice and misery in this island removed. "War and contention cease. Unwholesome trades and manufactories do not exist. Crowds no longer collect together in great and pestilent cities for purposes of Court intrigue, of commerce, and vicious gratification. Simple, healthy, and rational amusements take place of drinking, gambling, and debauchery. There are no towns sufficiently large to have any prejudicial effects on the human constitution. The greater part of the happy inhabitants of this terrestrial Paradise live in hamlets and farm-houses, scattered over the face of the country. All men are equal. The labors of luxury are at an end, and the necessary labors of agriculture are shared amicably among all. The number of persons and the produce of the island we suppose to be the same as at present. "The spirit of benevolence guided by impartial justice will divide this produce among all the members of society according to their wants. Though it would be impossible that they should all have animal food every day, yet vegetable food, with meat occasionally, would satisfy the desires of a frugal people, and would be sufficient to preserve them in health, strength, and spirits."

"Mr. Godwin considers marriage as a fraud and a monopoly. Let us suppose the commerce of the sexes established upon principles of the most perfect freedom. Mr. Godwin does not think himself that this freedom would lead to a promiscuous intercourse, and in this I perfectly agree with him. The love of variety is a vicious, corrupt, and unnatural taste, and could not prevail in any great degree in a simple and virtuous state of society. Each man would probably select for himself a partner to whom he would adhere, as long as that adherence continued to be the choice of both parties. It would be of little consequence, according to Mr. Godwin, how many children a woman had, or to whom they belonged. Provisions and assistance would spontaneously flow from the quarter in

which they abounded to the quarter in which they were deficient, and every man according to his capacity would be ready to furnish instruction to the rising generation."

"I cannot conceive a form of society so favorable upon the whole to population. The irremediableness of marriage, as it is at present constituted, undoubtedly deters many from entering into this state. An unshackled intercourse, on the contrary, would be a most powerful incitement to early attachments, and as we are supposing no anxiety about the future support of children to exist, I do not conceive that there would be one woman in a hundred, of twenty-three years of age, without a family."

"With these extraordinary encouragements to population, and every cause of depopulation, as we have supposed, removed, the numbers would necessarily increase faster than in any society that has ever yet been known. I have before mentioned that the inhabitants of the back settlements of America appear to double their numbers in fifteen years. England is certainly a healthier country than the back settlements of America; and as we have supposed every house in the island to be airy and wholesome, and the encouragements to have a family greater even than in America, no probable reason can be assigned why the population should not double itself in less, if possible, than fifteen years." . . . "It is probable that the half of every man's time (in a system of equality) must be employed for this purpose (in agriculture). Yet with such a much greater exertion, a person who is acquainted with the nature of the soil of the country, and who reflects on the fertility of the lands already in cultivation, and the barrenness of those that are not cultivated, will be very much disposed to doubt whether the whole average produce could possibly be doubled in twenty years from the present period. The only chance of success would be from the ploughing up most of the grazing countries, and putting an end almost entirely to animal food. Yet this scheme would probably defeat itself. The soil of England will not produce much without dressing; and cattle seem to be necessary to make that species of manure which best suits the land.

"Alas, what becomes of the picture, where men lived in the midst of plenty, when no man was obliged to provide with anxiety and pain for his restless wants; when the narrow principles of selfishness did not exist; when the man was delivered from his perpetual anxiety for corporal support, and free to expatiate in the field of thought which is so congenial

to him? This beautiful fabric of the imagination vanishes at the severe touch of truth. . . . The children are sickly from insufficient food. The rosy flush of health gives place to the pallid cheek and hollow eye of misery."

In as short a period as fifty years the whole of the worst evils of society will certainly re-appear, if population be not checked (says Malthus) by moral restraint, vice, or misery. After showing that a régime of equality would inevitably end in these shallows, so long as the birth-rate was not restricted, Malthus contends that some such laws of private property, as those which at present exist, would be certain to re-appear and misery to be increased. He then continues to give the best account of the irrevocable contract of marriage, with which we are familiar, that any writer has ever attempted to give.

"The next subject which would come under discussion, intimately connected with the preceding, is the commerce of the sexes. It would be urged by those who had turned their attention to the true cause of the difficulties under which the community labored, that while every man felt secure that all his children would be well provided for by general benevolence, the powers of the earth would be absolutely inadequate to produce food for the population which would inevitably ensue; that even if the whole attention and labor of the society were directed to this sole point, and if by the most perfect security of property, and every other encouragement that could be thought of, the greatest possible increase of produce were yearly obtained; yet still the increase of food would by no means keep pace with the much more rapid increase of population; that some check to population, therefore, was imperiously called for; that the most natural and obvious check seemed to be to make every man provide for his own children; that this would operate in some respect as a measure and a guide in the increase of population, as it might be expected that no man would bring beings into the world for whom he could not find the means of support; that when this, notwithstanding, was the case, it seemed necessary, for the example of others, that the disgrace and inconvenience attending such conduct should fall upon that individual who had thus inconsiderately plunged himself and his innocent children into want and misery. The institution of marriage, or at least of some express or implied obligation on every man to support his own children, seems to be the natural result of these reasonings, in a community under the difficulties that we have supposed."

Mr. Malthus then proceeds with his theory of the reason why society punishes carelessness in sexual relations much more in the case of a woman than in that of a man. "The view of these difficulties presents us with a very natural reason why the disgrace which attends a breach of chastity should be greater in a woman than in a man. It could not be expected that a woman should have resources sufficient to support her own children. When, therefore, a woman had lived with a man who had entered into no compact to maintain her children; and aware of the inconveniences that he might bring upon himself, had deserted her, those children must necessarily fall upon the society for support or starve. And to prevent the frequent recurrence of such an inconvenience, as it would be highly unjust to punish so natural a fault by personal restraint or infliction, society might agree to punish it with disgrace. The defence is besides more obvious and conspicuous in the woman, and less liable to any mistake. The father of a child may not always be known; but the same uncertainty cannot easily exist with regard to the mother. Where the evidence of the offence was most complete, and the inconvenience to society at the same time the greatest, there it was agreed that the largest share of blame should fall. The obligation on every man to support his children the society would enforce by positive law, and the greater degree of inconvenience or labor to which a family would necessarily subject him, added to some feature of disgrace, which every human being must incur who leads another into unhappiness, might be considered as a sufficient punishment for the man.

"That a woman should at present be almost driven from society for an offence which men commit nearly with impunity, seems to be undoubtedly a breach of natural justice. But the origin of the custom, as the most obvious and effectual method of preventing the frequent recurrence of a serious inconvenience to a community, appears to be natural, though not perhaps perfectly justifiable. This origin, however, is now lost in the new train of ideas that the custom has since generated. What at first sight might be dictated by state necessity is now supported by female delicacy, and operates with the greatest force on that part of the society, where, if the original intention of the custom were preserved, there is the least occasion for it."

These most ingenious speculations of our author contain undoubtedly a great deal of truth in them. At the same time, it is clear that when society shall begin to replace traditional

views of morality by more positive and scientific deductions from experience, when it shall be generally acknowledged in all civilised states of the old world that the basis of true morality must consist in that conduct which will keep the birth-rate very low, Mr. Malthus's arguments in favour of irrevocable marriage and excessive severity towards those who prefer not to enter the imperfect marriage arrangements of modern European countries, with a full knowledge of what they are doing, must be gradually replaced by some law which shall affix a stigma, not so much upon illegitimacy, but rather upon the production of large families. Those who are well acquainted with the modern position of the marriage question in Europe, and who have studied what has been written on it by Wilhelm von Humboldt and J. S. Mill, will readily acknowledge that, if society would but take care to stigmatise as immoral all those persons who take more than a very moderate share of the blessings of parentage in old countries, it might, as Humboldt proposes, entirely withdraw from all legal interference in the contracts between the sexes. Moral obligations might still remain in full force towards those who have been led to base their future life on the implied continuance of such contracts; but doubtless the law of civilised states is at present tending towards far greater facility of dissolving such contracts than Mr. Malthus seems to have approved of.

In chapter III. of book III. our author disposes of the so-called "futurity fallacy," which unfortunately still continues to be opposed to the teachings of the economists, as if it had not been over and over again refuted by the author of the essay on population. "Other persons," says our author, "besides Mr. Godwin have imagined that I looked to certain periods in future when population would exceed the means of subsistence in a much greater degree than at present, and that the evils arising from the principle of population were rather in contemplation than in existence; but this is a total misconception of my argument. Poverty, and not absolute famine, is the specific effect of the principle of population, as I have before endeavoured to show. Many countries are now suffering all the evils that can ever be expected to flow from this principle, and even if we were arrived at the absolute limit to all further increase of produce, a point which we shall certainly never reach, I should by no means expect that those evils would be in any marked manner aggravated. The increase of produce in most European countries is so very slow, compared with what would be required to support an

unrestricted increase of people, that the checks which are constantly in action to repress the population to the level of a produce increasing so slowly would have very little more to do in wearing it down to a produce absolutely stationary."

The great historian Hume had pointed out that in those countries where infanticide was permitted by law, there was greater over-population than in others where it was prohibited, because parents were too humane to betake themselves to such a frightful "positive check." The excessive poverty of China, where the custom of infanticide prevails, is an example of the truth of Mr. Hume's remarks. "It is still, however, true," adds our author (p. 139), "that the expedient is, in its own nature, adequate to the end for which it was cited, but to make it so in fact, it must be done by the magistrate, and not left to the parents. The almost invariable tendency of this custom to increase population, when it depends entirely upon the parents, shows the extreme pain which they must feel in making such a sacrifice, even when the distress arising from excessive poverty may be supposed to have deadened in great measure their sensibility. What must the pain be then upon the supposition of the interference of a magistrate, or of a positive law, to make parents destroy a child, which they feel the desire and think they possess the power of supporting? The permission of infanticide is bad enough and cannot but have a bad effect on the moral sensibility of a nation: but I cannot conceive anything more detestable or shocking to the feelings than any direct regulation of this kind, although sanctioned by the names of Plato and Aristotle."

It is a singular fact that Mr. Godwin (*Reply*, p. 70), made a supposition respecting the number of children that might be allowed to each prolific marriage. That writer, however, did not enter into any detail as to the mode by which a greater number might be prevented. The last check which Mr. Godwin mentions, Mr. Malthus feels persuaded is the only one which that author would seriously recommend. It is "That sentiment, whether virtue, prudence, or pride, which continually restrains the universality and frequent repetition of the marriage contract." He says he entirely approves of this check, and adds that the tendency to early marriage is so strong that we want every possible help that we can get to counteract it; and therefore he thinks that a system of equality like that proposed by Mr. Godwin, which tends to weaken the foundations of private property, and to lessen in any degree

the full advantage and superiority which each individual may derive from his prudence, must remove the only counteracting weight to the passion of love that can be depended upon for any essential effect.

Mr. Godwin acknowledges that in his system "the ill consequences of a numerous family will not come so coarsely home to each man's individual interest as they do at present." Mr. Malthus is sorry to say that from what we know hitherto of the human character, we can have no rational hopes of success without this coarse application to individual interest.

In our author's day it was out of the question for him to be aware that Mr. Godwin's hint as to the limitation of the family would come to be the prominent social doctrine it has since become. In France, among the respectable classes the production of a large family is now looked upon as quite a mark of a low state of morality and culture; and so effectual has this public opinion become in that most remarkable state that the families of the professional classes are not even two on an average (1.74). That Mr. Malthus should have considered late marriage as the only remedy for poverty is easily understood. Experience alone can enable mankind to judge of how happiness is to be best attained; and it was doubtless because our incomparable writer on social questions, Mr. J. S. Mill, had so long resided in France that he could take the decided stand he did against the large families which cause such terrible misery in England and Germany. The result of this great prudence among the better classes of France is well shown by the very small excess of births over deaths. Thus, in 1879, the increase of population from this cause was but 92,000, whereas M. Yves Guyot speaks of a total of births in 1879 in unfortunate Ireland of 887,055, with a total of deaths of 500,348, which gives an excess of births over deaths, in a population of about five millions, of 386,707. No wonder that Ireland is so fond of emigration and still so steeped in poverty.

It has recently been contended by the author of the "Elements of Social Science" that the only way of raising wages and profits in old countries and making life a desirable thing to all lies in the state making it an offence, to be punished by a small fine, to bring into an overcrowded country more than a very moderate average number of children. Mr. J. S. Mill's teachings tended in the same direction, and this view of the duty of the citizen towards his neighbour is fast becoming a piece of morality accepted by

the most thinking and most dutiful portion of society. When this duty of limiting our offspring, not only to the income we possess, but also to the powers possessed by the community, of affording an increase of numbers, becomes a political question, then, but not until then, will happiness for the masses be possible.





## CHAPTER IX.

## OF POOR LAWS.

IN Chapter V. of Mr. Malthus's book iii., we have these luminous remarks of his on Poor Laws, which have been so often quoted by statesmen and philanthropists:—

“It is,” says our author, “a subject often started in conversation, and mentioned always as a matter of great surprise, that, notwithstanding the immense sum which is annually collected for the poor in this country, there is still so much distress among them. But a man who looks a little below the surface of things would be much more astonished if the fact were otherwise than it is showed to be, or even if a collection universally of eighteen shillings in the pound, instead of four, were materially to alter it. Suppose that by a subscription of the rich, the eighteen pence or two shillings which men earn now were made up to four shillings, it might be imagined, perhaps, that they would then be able to live comfortably, and have a piece of meat every day for their dinner. But this would be a very false conclusion. The transfer of three additional shillings a day to each labourer would not increase the quantity of meat in the country. There is not at present enough for all to have a moderate share. What would then be the consequence? The competition among the buyers in the market of meat would rapidly raise the price from 8d. or 9d. to two or three shillings in the pound, and the commodity would not be divided among many more people than at present.

“When an article is scarce, and cannot be distributed to all, he that can show the most valid patent, that is, he that offers the most money, becomes the possessor . . . and when subsistence is scarce in proportion to the number of the people, it is of little consequence whether the lowest members of the society possess two shillings or five. They must, at all events, be reduced to live upon the hardest fare and in the smallest quantity.

“A collection from the rich of eighteen shillings in the pound, even if distributed in the most judicious manner, would have an effect similar to that resulting from the suppo-

sition which I have just made; and no possible sacrifices of the rich, particularly in money, would for any time prevent the recurrence of distress among the lower members of society, whoever they were. Great changes might, indeed, be made. The rich might become poor and some of the poor rich; but while the present proportion between population and food continues, a part of society must necessarily find it difficult to support a family, and this difficulty will naturally fall on the least fortunate members."

Malthus mentions that in a great scarcity which occurred in England in 1801, no less than ten millions sterling were given away in charity. In one case cited by our author, a man with a family received fourteen shillings a week from his parish. His common earnings were ten shillings a week, and his weekly revenue therefore twenty-four. Before the scarcity he had been in the habit of purchasing a bushel of flour a week, with eight shillings perhaps, and consequently had two shillings out of his ten to spare for other necessaries. During the scarcity he was enabled to purchase the same quantity at nearly three times the price. He paid twenty-two shillings for his bushel of flour, and had as before two shillings remaining for other wants.

The price of labour, says Malthus, when left to find its natural level, is a most important political barometer, explaining the relations between the supply of provisions and the demand for them: between the quantity to be consumed and the number of consumers: and, taken on the average, it further expresses clearly the wants of society respecting population—that is, whatever may be the number of children to a marriage necessary to maintain exactly the present population, the price of labour will be just sufficient to support this number, or be above it or below it, according to the state of the real funds for the maintenance of labour, whether stationary, progressive, or retrograde. "Instead, however, of considering it in this light, we consider it as something which we may raise or depress at pleasure, something which depends principally upon his Majesty's justices of the peace. When an advance in the price of provisions already expresses that the demand is too great for the supply, in order to put the labourer in the same position as before, we raise the price of labour; that is, we increase the demand, and are then much surprised that the price of provisions continues rising. In this we act much in the same manner as if, when the quicksilver in the common glass stood at 'stormy,' we were to raise it by some

mechanical pressure to 'settled fair,' and then be greatly astonished that it continued raining."

"In the natural order of things, a scarcity must tend to lower, instead of to raise, the price of labour. Many men who would shrink at the proposal of a maximum would propose themselves that the price of labour should be proportioned to the price of provisions, and do not seem to be aware that the two proposals are very nearly of the same nature, and that both tend directly to famine. It matters not whether we enable the labourer to purchase the same quantity of provisions which he did before by fixing their price, or by raising in proportion the price of labour."

These arguments of Mr. Malthus were a death-blow to the frightful system of the rate in aid of wages which at the early part of the present century was fast turning England into the most pauper-ridden country in Europe.

In Chapter VI. of Book iii., Malthus remarks that, independently of any considerations respecting a year of deficient crops, it is evident that an increase of population without a proportional increase of food must lower the value of each man's earnings. The food must necessarily be distributed in smaller quantities, and consequently a day's labour will purchase a smaller quantity of provisions. An increase in the price of provisions will arise either from an increase of population faster than the means of subsistence, or from a different distribution of the money of the society.

Speaking of the Poor Laws of 1805, he says: "The Poor Laws of England tend to depress the general condition of the poor in two ways. Their first obvious tendency is to increase population without increasing the food for its support. A poor man may marry with little or no prospect of being able to support a family without parish assistance. They may be said, therefore, to create the poor which they maintain; and as the provisions of the country must, in consequence of the increased population be distributed to every man in smaller proportions, it is evident that the labour of those who are not supported by parish assistance will purchase a smaller quantity of provisions than before, and consequently many of them must be driven to apply for assistance.

"Secondly, the quantity of provisions consumed in work-houses, upon a part of the society that cannot be considered the most valuable part, diminishes the shares that would otherwise belong to the more industrious and more worthy members, and

this, in the same manner, forces more to become dependent. If the poor in the workhouses were to live better than they do now, this new distribution of the money of the society would tend more conspicuously to depress the condition of those out of the workhouse, by occasioning an advance in the price of provisions."

Fortunately for England, says our author, a spirit of independence still remains among the peasantry. The poor laws are strongly calculated to eradicate this spirit. "They have succeeded in part: but had they succeeded as completely as might have been expected, their pernicious tendency would not have been so long concealed."

The following paragraph has often been cited by violent democrats as a proof of the hard-heartedness of Malthus. At present, few of the ultra-liberal party in this country are ill-instructed enough to vituperate any one for his opinions in this matter. "Hard as it may appear," he continues, "in individual cases, dependent poverty ought to be held disgraceful. Such a stimulus seems to be absolutely necessary to promote the happiness of the general mass of mankind: and every general attempt to weaken this stimulus, however benevolent its intention, will always defeat its own purpose. If men be induced to marry from the mere prospect of parish provision, they are not only unjustly tempted to bring unhappiness and dependence upon themselves and children, but they are tempted, without knowing it, to injure all in the same class with themselves."

It is very probable that the independence of character of the English labouring classes was fatally lowered by the system Malthus complains of, for to this very day, in many counties, the following experience of our author holds good. "The labouring poor, to use a vulgar expression, seem always to live from hand to mouth. Their present wants employ their whole attention; and they seldom think of the future. Even when they have an opportunity of saving they seldom exercise it; but all that they earn beyond their present necessities goes, generally speaking, to the alehouse. The poor laws may, therefore, be said to diminish both the power and the will to save among the common people, and thus to weaken one of the strongest incentives to sobriety and industry, and consequently to happiness."

No wonder that Thomas Chalmers, the great Scottish economist, struggled so hard against the introduction of the

English poor laws into Scotland. That poor law in Scotland is at present worse administered than it even is in England, and has done much to create a pauper class. There is, indeed, but little prospect of another poet like Burns arising in modern Scotland. "The Cotters' Saturday Night" was composed when the parish gave discriminating relief only to the worthy and necessitous.

"These evils," says Malthus, "attendant on the poor laws seem to be irremediable. If assistance is to be distributed to a certain class of people, a power must be lodged somewhere of discriminating the proper objects, and of managing the concerns of the institutions that are necessary; but any great interference with the affairs of other people is a species of tyranny, and in the common course of things, the exercise of this power may be expected to become grating to those who are driven to ask for support. The tyranny of justices, churchwardens, and overseers, is a common complaint among the poor; but the fault does not lie so much in these persons, who probably before they were in power were not more cruel than other people, but in the nature of all such institutions. I feel persuaded that if the poor laws had never existed in this country, though there might have been a few more instances of very severe distress, the aggregate mass of happiness among the common people would have been much greater than it is at present."

The famous 43rd of Elizabeth, which has been so often referred to and admired, enacts that the overseers of the poor "shall take order from time to time, by and with the consent of two or more justices, for setting to work the children of all such whose parents shall not by the said persons be thought able to keep and maintain their children; and also such persons married or unmarried, as having no means to maintain them, use no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by. And also to raise, weekly or otherwise, by taxation of every inhabitant, and every occupier of lands in the said parish (in such competent sums as they shall think fit) a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wax, thread, iron, and other necessary ware and stuff, to set the poor to work."

"What is this," exclaims Malthus, "but saying that the funds for the maintenance of labour in this country may be increased at will, and without limit, by a *fiat* of Government, or an assessment of the overseers. Strictly speaking, this clause is as arrogant and as absurd as if it had enacted that

two ears of wheat should grow where one only had grown before. Canute, when he commanded the waves not to wet his princely foot, did not, in reality, assume a greater power over the laws of nature. No directions are given to the overseers how to increase the funds for the maintenance of labour; the necessity of industry, economy, and enlightened exertion, in the management of agricultural and commercial capital, is not insisted on for this purpose; but it is expected that a miraculous increase of these funds should immediately follow an edict of the Government, used at the discretion of some ignorant parish officers."

Mr. Malthus adds to these denunciations of the Poor Law Act of Elizabeth, as carried out in 1805, the following: "If this clause were really and *bond fide* put into execution, and the shame attending the receiving of parish relief worn off, every labouring man might marry as early as he pleased, under the certain prospect of having all his children properly provided for; and, as according to the supposition, there would be no check on population from the consequences of poverty after marriage, the increase of population would be rapid beyond example in old States. After what has been said in the former part of this work, it is submitted to the reader whether the utmost exertions of the enlightened government could, in this case, make the food keep pace with the population, much less a more arbitrary effort, the tendency of which is certainly rather to diminish than to increase the funds for the maintenance of productive labour."

In the year 1880 it was found by the census of our most flourishing colony of New Zealand that the population of those fertile islands had actually been able to double in eleven years. But, as Mr. Malthus observes: "After a country has once ceased to be in the peculiar situation of a new colony, we shall always find that in the actual state of its cultivation, or in that state which may rationally be expected from the most enlightened government, the increase of its food can never allow for any length of time an unrestricted increase of population, and, therefore, the due execution of the clause in the 43rd of Elizabeth, as a permanent law, is a physical impossibility."

One only circumstance, Mr. Malthus seems to think, in the administration of the English Poor Laws at the commencement of this century prevented them from plunging the country into ruin. This was the condition that they contained that each parish should maintain its own poor. "As each

parish," he says, "is obliged to maintain its own poor, it is naturally fearful of increasing their numbers, and every landholder is, in consequence, more inclined to pull down than to build cottages. This deficiency of cottages operates necessarily as a strong check to marriage, and this check is probably the principal reason why we have been able to continue the system of the poor laws so long."

Mr. Malthus' writings made such a powerful impression on the minds of his contemporaries, that in 1834 an entire revolution took place in the Poor Laws of England and Wales. Mr. Gladstone, in an admirable speech on Free Trade, delivered in Leeds in the summer of 1881, refers to the passing of this Act as the most beneficent change that had preceded the long and earnest struggle which immediately followed upon the principles of Free Trade, and which culminated in 1846 in the abolition of the duties on food supplies. Mr. John Stuart Mill is enthusiastic in his admiration of the Act of 1834. In his magnificent and well known chapter on Popular Remedies for Low Wages (Book ij. chap. 12, § 2.), he thus speaks of the English Law of 1834 :—

"To give profusely to the people, whether under the name of charity or of employment, without placing them under such influences that prudential motives shall act powerfully upon them, is to lavish the means of benefiting mankind without attaining the object. Leave the people in a situation in which their condition manifestly depends upon their number, and the greatest permanent benefit may be derived from any sacrifice made to improve the physical well-being of the present generation, and raise, by that means, the habits of their children. But remove the regulation of their wages from their own control; guarantee to them a certain payment, either by law or by the feeling of the community; and no amount of comfort that you can give them will make either them or their descendants look to to their own self-restraint as the proper means for preserving them in that state. You will only make them indignantly claim the continuance of your guarantee to themselves, and their full complement of possible posterity."

"On these grounds some writers have altogether condemned the English Poor Law, and any system of relief to the able-bodied, at least when uncombined with systematic legal precautions against over-population. The famous Act of the 43rd of Elizabeth undertook, on the part of the public, to provide work and wages for all the able-bodied; and there is little doubt that if the intent of that Act had been fully carried out,

and no means had been adopted by the administrators of relief to neutralize its natural tendencies, the poor-rate would by this time have absorbed the whole net produce of the land and labour of the country."

"It is not at all surprising, therefore, that Mr. Malthus and others should at first have concluded against all Poor Laws whatever. It required much experience, and careful examination of different modes of Poor Law management, to give assurance that the admission of an absolute right to be supported at the cost of other people could exist in law and in fact, without fatally relaxing the springs of industry and the restraints of prudence. This, however, was fully substantiated by the investigations of the original Poor Law Commissioners. Hostile as they are unjustly accused of being to the principle of legal relief, they are the first who fully proved the compatibility of any Poor Law in which a right to relief was recognised with the permanent interests of the labouring class and of posterity."

"By a collection of facts, experimentally ascertained in parishes scattered throughout England, it was shown that the guarantee of support could be freed from its injurious effects upon the minds and habits of the people, if the relief, though ample in respect to necessities, was accompanied with conditions which they disliked, consisting of some restraints on their freedom, and the privation of some indulgences."

"Under this proviso it may be regarded as irrevocably established that the fate of no member of the community need be abandoned to chance; that society can and therefore ought to ensure every individual belonging to it against the extreme of want; that the condition, even of those who are unable to find their own support, need not be one of physical suffering, or the dread of it, but only of restricted indulgences and enforced rigidity of discipline. This is surely something gained for humanity, important in itself, and still more so as a step to something beyond; and humanity has no worse enemies than those who lend themselves, either knowingly or unintentionally, to bring odium on this law, or on the principles in which it originated."

"In the actual circumstances of every country (says Malthus, p. 180, Book iii.) the prolific power of nature seems always ready to exert nearly its full force; but within the limit of possibility, there is nothing, perhaps, more improbable, or more out of the reach of any government to effect, than the direction of the industry of its subjects in



such a manner as to produce the greatest quantity of sustenance that the earth could bear. It evidently could not be done without the most complete violation of the law of property, from which everything that is valuable to man has hitherto arisen. Such is the disposition to marry, particularly in very young people, that if the difficulties of providing for a family were entirely removed, very few would remain single at twenty-two. But what statesman or rational government could propose that all animal food should be prohibited, that no horses should be used for business or pleasure, that all people should live upon potatoes, and that the whole industry of the nation should be exerted in the production of them, except what was necessary for the mere necessities of clothing and houses. Could such a revolution be effected, would it be desirable; particularly as, in a few years, notwithstanding all their exertions, want, with less resource than ever, would inevitably recur."

"The attempts," says our author, "to employ the poor on any great sale in manufactures have almost invariably failed, and the stock and materials have been wasted. In those few parishes which, by better management of larger funds, have been enabled to persevere in this system, the effect of these new manufactures in the market must have been to throw out of employment many independent workmen, who were before engaged in fabrications of a similar nature. This effect has been placed in a strong point of view by Daniel De Foe, in an address to Parliament, entitled *Giving Alms no Charity*. Speaking of the employment of parish children in manufactories, he says, 'For every skein of worsted these poor children spin there must be a skein the less spun by some poor family that spun it before.' Sir F. M. Eden, on the same subject, observes, that whether mops and brooms are made by parish children or by private workmen, no more can be sold than the public is in want of."

"It will be said, perhaps, that the same reasoning might be applied to any new capital brought into competition in a particular trade or manufacture, which can rarely be done without injuring, in some degree, those that were engaged in it before. But there is a material difference in the two cases. In this, the competition is perfectly fair, and what every man on entering his business must lay his account to. He may rest secure that he will not be supplanted, unless his competitor possess superior skill and industry. In the other case, the competition is supported by a great bounty, by which means,

notwithstanding very inferior skill and industry on the part of his competitors, the independent workman may be undersold, and unjustly excluded from the market. He himself is made to contribute to this competition against his own earnings, and the funds for the maintenance of labour are thus turned from the support of a trade which yields a proper profit to one which cannot maintain itself without a bounty. It should be observed in general that when a fund for the maintenance of labour is raised by assessment, the greatest part of it is not a new capital brought into trade, but an old one, which before was much more profitably employed, turned into a new channel. The farmer pays to the poor's rates for the encouragement of a bad and unprofitable manufacture what he would have employed on his land with infinitely more advantage to his country. In the one case, the funds for the maintenance of labour are daily diminished; in the other, daily increased. And this obvious tendency of assessments for the employment of the poor to decrease the real funds for the maintenance of labour in any country, aggravates the absurdity of supposing that it is in the power of a government to find employment for all its subjects, however fast they may increase."

It is strange how the present generation begins to forget the truths that were clearly seen by the one immediately preceding. We have had a proof of this in the late agitation for Protection *versus* Free Trade. And on November 5th, 1881, there was another example so given in the case of a deputation of ratepayers of Newington, who waited on Mr. Dodson, the President of the Local Government Board, to ask him to administer out-door relief instead of building a new workhouse at Champion Hill, at a cost of £200,000. The deputation, which actually contained a professor of political economy, Mr. Thorold Rogers, urged that the system of the workhouse test entailed a cost of 7s. a week to the parish, whereas, if persons were relieved at home, 8s. or 4s. would be all that would be required. Well might a French economist write an essay upon "things that are seen, and things that are not seen"!

Mr. Dodson, in his able reply to this deputation, tried to teach again the lesson taught by the Poor Law Commissioners in 1834, that the whole object and system of the Poor Law which was then established in this country was, that it should be strictly administered, with a view simply of testing and checking absolute destitution, and no means, no effectual means, had been devised, of so testing destitution, except by offering the house: and just in

proportion as the poor-law was strictly administered, so in proportion the entrance to the house was insisted upon as the condition of relief. In the case of out-door relief it was impossible absolutely to test the case. Out-door relief could not be closely watched. They could not tell, when a man received relief, that he was not receiving aid from other sources, that he was not earning something for himself, and might possibly, if he were left to his own resources, earn more. This was a system, he said, which in that way acted as a check upon exertion and upon providence; and he need not say that anything which acted as a check on these could not result but in the increase of pauperism, the demoralisation of the working classes, and in increased charges upon the ratepayers. Of course, he knew that it was very tempting, when a case came before them, to relieve a man by out-door relief. They might give him 1s. 6d. and a loaf, or 2s.; and if they brought him into the house it would of course cost 4s. or 5s., and thus the ratepayers would not, for the moment, have so much to pay. But the system of the workhouse was not so expensive as that, for we knew that not more than one man in ten would go into the house. Where ten would accept out-door relief, they could not get more than one or two who would accept in-door relief. And, besides, they must further remember this, that if they increased the rates by this system, they were making the prudent and industrious man, who maintained himself and his family by his own labour, support the idlers and vagrants who did not make similar exertions. He knew how tempting it was to wish to save the money of the ratepayers, and at the same time to gratify the feelings of humanity to the poor by giving out-door relief, since it often appeared hard and cruel to compel people to enter the workhouse, and, as it was said, to "break up their homes." But he, Mr. Dodson, reminded his hearers that, as guardians, they had the administration of the ratepayers' money, and not the administration of a benevolent fund. They were not administering a Charity, but were the stewards for the ratepayers, and were bound to administer the Poor Law in the manner which, not superficially and for the moment, was the most really economical. The workhouse test was known by experience to be, in the long run, the only truly economical and feasible way of administering relief to the destitute. For what, he asked, was the whole history of the modern English Poor Law? What was the condition of England before 1880, when that law was loosely administered? It was a system ruinous to the indigent classes, and destructive to the ratepayers. The Poor Law Commissioners had shown that the only way in which the people could be

guaranteed against starvation was by enforcing the workhouse test, and thus avoiding the creation of a pauper class too numerous to be alleviated.

It is gratifying to find that Mr. Dodson is so well instructed in the affairs of the office in which he holds sway. Doubtless, he is also aware of the grand difficulty which opposes all State assistance of the poor at their own houses, and which consists in the utter recklessness still so prevalent among the uneducated classes as to the size of their families. To give out-door relief in the present state of public opinion would merely be to offer a premium upon large families, and this could, of course, only result in early death, degradation of the family, and a relapse into barbarism. Even in Australia it has been found possible to raise up a pauper class by such unwise out-door doles, which are no charity at all, but merely a means to degrade and enslave the poorest classes.



## CHAPTER X.

## WEALTH AS IT AFFECTS THE POOR.

**I**N the seventh chapter of book III. Mr. Malthus criticises an essay of Adam Smith, on "Increasing Wealth as it Affects the Condition of the Poor." The professed object of Adam Smith's enquiry is the nature and causes of the wealth of nations. "There is another, however, perhaps still more interesting (says our author) which he occasionally mixes with it, the causes which affect the happiness and comfort of the lower orders of society, which in every nation forms the most numerous class. I am sufficiently aware of the near connection of these two subjects, and that, generally speaking, the causes which contribute to increase the wealth of a state tend also to increase the happiness of the lower classes of the people. But perhaps Dr. Smith has considered these two inquiries as still more nearly connected than they really are; at least he has not stopped to take notice of those instances, when the wealth of a society may increase, according to his definition of wealth, without having a proportional tendency to increase the comforts of the labouring part of it."

Malthus observes that the comforts of the labouring poor must necessarily depend upon the funds destined for the maintenance of labour, and will generally be in proportion to the rapidity of their increase. The demand for labour, which such increase occasions, will of course raise the value of labour; and till the additional number of hands required are reared, the increased funds will be distributed to the same number of persons as before, and therefore every labourer will live more at his ease. But Adam Smith was wrong when he represented every increase of the revenue or stock of a society, as a proportional increase of these funds. Such surplus stock or revenue will indeed always be considered by the individual possessing it, as an additional fund from which he may maintain more labour; but with regard to the whole country, it will not be an effectual fund for the maintenance of an additional number of labourers, unless part of it be convertible into an additional quantity of provisions; and it will not be so convertible when the increase has arisen merely from the produce of labour, and not from the produce of land. A distinction may in this case occur between the number of hands which the stock of a society could employ and the number which its territory can maintain.

"Supposing a nation for a course of years to add what it saved from its yearly revenue to its manufacturing capital solely, and not to its capital employed on land, it is evident that it might grow richer without a power of supporting a greater number of labourers, and therefore without any increase in the real funds for the maintenance of labour. There would, notwithstanding, be a demand for labour, from the extent of manufacturing capital. This demand would of course raise the price of labour; but if the yearly stock of provisions in the country were not increasing this rise would soon turn out merely nominal, as the price of provisions must necessarily rise with it."

The question is how far wealth increasing in this way has a tendency to better the condition of the labouring poor. "It is a self-evident proposition, that any general advance in the price of labour, the stock of provisions remaining the same, can only be a nominal advance, as it must shortly be followed by a proportional rise in provisions. The increase in the price of labour which we have supposed, would have no permanent effect therefore in giving to the labouring poor a greater command over the necessaries of life. In this respect they would be nearly in the same state as before. In some other respects they would be in a worse state. A greater portion of them would be employed in manufactures, and a smaller portion in agriculture. (The present condition of England in 1882.) And this exchange of profession will be allowed, I think, by all to be very unfavourable to health, an essential ingredient to happiness, and to be further disadvantageous on account of the greater uncertainty of manufacturing labour, arising from the capricious tastes of man, the accidents of war, and other causes which occasionally produce very severe distress among the lower classes of society."

Mr. Malthus then feelingly alludes to the miserable condition of the poor young operatives in Manchester in his day, and to the destruction of the comforts of the family so often caused by the women becoming so frequently mere *hands* in mills and quite unacquainted with any household work. "The females are wholly uninstructed in sewing, knitting, and other domestic affairs, requisite to make them notable and frugal wives and mothers. This is a very great misfortune to them and to the public, as is sadly proved by a comparison of the families of labourers in husbandry, and those in manufactures in general. In the former we meet

with neatness, cleanliness, and comfort: in the latter with filth, rags, and poverty, although their wages may be nearly double those of the husbandman. In addition to these evils we all know how subject particular manufactures are to fail, from the caprice of taste, or the accident of war. The weavers of Spitalfield were plunged into the most severe distress by the fashion of muslins instead of silks; and numbers of the workmen of Sheffield and Birmingham were for a time thrown out of employment, from the adoption of shoe strings and covered buttons, instead of buckles and metal buttons. Under such circumstances, unless the increase of the riches of a country from manufactures gives the lower classes of the society, on an average, a decidedly greater command over the necessaries and conveniences of life, it will not appear that their condition is improved."

Mr. Malthus continues: "It will be said, perhaps, that the advance in the price of provisions will immediately turn some additional capital into the channel of agriculture, and thus occasion a much greater produce. But from experience it appears that this is an effect which sometimes follows very slowly, particularly if heavy taxes that affect agricultural industry, and an advance in the price of labour, had preceded the advance in the price of provisions. It may also be said, that the additional capital of the nation would enable it to import provisions sufficient for the maintenance of those whom its stock could employ. A small country with a large navy, and great accommodation for inland carriage, may indeed import and distribute an effectual quantity of provisions; but in large landed nations, if they may be so-called, an importation adequate at all times to the demand is scarcely possible."

In 1881 the inhabitants of the British Islands had to import food consisting of live and dead meat, butter, eggs, flour, and wheat, &c., at an expense of no less than one hundred and thirty-two millions sterling, inclusive of sugar, one of the requisites of nutrition, or at the cost of one hundred and eight millions sterling without sugar. And yet the price of butter was about 1s. 6d. the pound and meat about 9d. a pound in London, whilst milk sold for 5d. the quart. Thus we see how true the words of the great writer on population were, even writing before the days of steam and electric telegraphs, improvements in the way of obtaining food supplies that might easily have made food as cheap here as in New Zealand, had it not been for the excessive birth-rate

that has been going on for the whole of this century in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Malthus points out that a nation which from its extent and population must necessarily support the greater part of its population on the produce of its own soil, but which yet, in average years, draws a small portion of its corn from abroad, is in a more precarious position with regard to the constancy of its supplies, than such states as draw almost the whole of their provisions from other countries. A nation possessed of a large territory is unavoidably subject to this uncertainty of its means of subsistence, when the commercial part of its population is either equal to, or has increased beyond the surplus produce of its cultivators. "No reserve being in these cases left in exportation, the full effect of every deficiency from unfavorable seasons must necessarily be felt; and, although the riches of such a country may enable it for a certain period to continue raising the nominal rate of wages, so as to give the lower classes of the society a power of purchasing imported corn at a high price; yet, a sudden demand can very seldom be fully answered, the competition in the market will invariably raise the price of provisions in full proportion to the advance in the price of labor; the lower classes will be but little relieved, and the dearth will operate severely throughout all the ranks of society.

According to the natural order of things, years of scarcity must occasionally recur in all landed nations. They ought always therefore to enter into our consideration; and the prosperity of any country may justly be considered as precarious, in which the funds for the maintenance of labour are liable to great and sudden fluctuations from every unfavourable variation in the seasons.

"But putting for the present, years of scarcity out of the question. When the commercial population of any country increases so much beyond the surplus produce of the cultivators, that the demand for imported corn is not easily supplied, and the price rises in proportion to the rate of wages, no further increase of riches will have any tendency to give the laborer a greater command over the necessaries of life. In the progress of wealth this will naturally take place, either from the largeness of the supply wanted, the increased distance from which it is brought, and consequently, the increased expense of importation; the greater consumption of it in the countries in which it is usually purchased, or, what must unavoidably



happen, the necessity of a greater distance of inland carriage in these countries. Such a nation, by increasing industry in the improvement of machinery, may still go on increasing the yearly quantity of its manufactured produce; but its funds for the maintenance of labor, and consequently its population, will be perfectly stationary. This point is the natural limit to the population of all commercial states. In countries at a great distance from this limit, an effect approaching to what has been here described will take place, whenever the march of commerce and manufactures is more rapid than that of agriculture."

Malthus takes China as an example, that every increase in the stock or revenue of a nation cannot be considered as an increase of the real funds for the maintenance of labor, and therefore cannot have the same good effect upon the condition of the poor. China, as Adam Smith remarked, has probably long been as rich as the nature of her laws and institutions will admit; although, with other laws and institutions, and on the supposition of unshackled foreign commerce, she might still be richer, yet, the question is, would such an increase of wealth be an increase of the real funds for the maintenance of labor, and consequently tend to place the lower classes in China in a state of greater plenty?

Malthus contends that if trade and foreign commerce were held in great honour in China, it is evident that, from the great number of laborers, and the cheapness of labor, she might work up manufactures for foreign sale to an immense amount. It is equally evident, that from the great bulk of provisions, and the amazing extent of her inland territory, she could not in return import such a quantity as would be any sensible addition to the annual stock of subsistence in the country. "Her immense amount of manufactures therefore, she would exchange chiefly for luxuries collected from all parts of the world. At present it appears that no labor whatever is spared in the production of food. The country is rather over-peopled in proportion to what its stock can employ, and labor is therefore so abundant that no pains are taken to abridge it. The consequence of this is probably the greatest production of food that the soil can possibly afford; for it will be generally observed, that processes for abridging agricultural labor, though they may enable a farmer to bring a certain quantity of grain cheaper to market, tend rather to diminish, than increase the whole produce. An immense capital could not be employed in China in preparing manufactures for foreign trade, without taking off so many laborers from agriculture, as to alter this state of

things, and in some degree, to diminish the produce of the country. The demand for manufacturing laborers would naturally raise the price of labor; but, as the quantity of subsistence would not be increased, the price of provisions would keep pace with it, or even more than keep pace with it, if the quantity of provisions were really decreasing. The country would, however, be evidently advancing in wealth. The exchangeable value of the annual produce of its land and labor would be annually augmented; yet the real funds for the maintenance of labor would be stationary, or even declining; and consequently, the increasing wealth of the nation would tend rather to depress than to raise the condition of the poor. With regard to the command over the necessities of life, they would be in the same, or rather worse state than before, and a great part of them would have exchanged the healthy labor of agriculture, for the unhealthy occupations of manufacturing industry."

The observations of the greatest living Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, of late years, have frequently pointed out to us how very unfair a proportion of the increasing wealth of this country has been absorbed by the possessors of capital, as compared with that by the recipients of wages. It may indeed be said, in the words of Mr. J. S. Mill, that owing to the way in which population has increased in this century in this country, *pari passu* with the increase of the wealth of the nation, it is doubtful whether all the improvements in manufactures and in instruments for abbreviating manual toil have taken one hour's work from the shoulders of the working classes.

"The condition of the poor in China," says Malthus, "is indeed very miserable at present, but this is not owing to their want of foreign commerce, but to their extreme tendency to marriage and increase; and if this tendency were to continue the same, the only way in which the introduction of a greater number of manufacturers could possibly make the lower classes of people richer, would be by increasing the mortality among them, which is certainly not a very desirable mode of growing rich." This argument of our author might convince both the fair traders and the free traders of this day, that neither free trade, nor protection, are panaceas against starvation among the poorest classes, and make them learn the lesson that a small family system alone can solve the fundamental question of

man's destiny—how to make the proportion of mouths to food most favorable.

The argument perhaps appears clearer when applied to China, because it is generally allowed that its wealth has been long stationary, and its soil cultivated nearly to the utmost. With regard to any other country it might always be a matter of dispute, at which of the two periods compared wealth was increasing the fastest, for Adam Smith, and others of his followers think that the condition of the poor depends on the rapidity of the increase of wealth at any particular epoch. Malthus to this replies that: "It is evident that two nations might increase exactly with the same rapidity in the exchangeable value of the annual products of their land and labor; yet, if one had applied itself chiefly to agriculture, and the other chiefly to commerce, the funds for the maintenance of labor, and consequently the effect of the increase of wealth in each nation, would be extremely different. In that which had applied itself chiefly to agriculture, the poor would live in greater plenty, and population would rapidly increase. In that which had applied itself chiefly to commerce the poor would be comparatively but little benefited, and consequently, population would either be stationary, or increase very slowly."

"The condition," says Malthus, "of the laboring poor, supposing their habits to remain the same, cannot be very essentially improved, but by giving them a greater command over the means of subsistence. But any advantage of this kind must from its nature be temporary, and is therefore really of less value to them than any permanent change in their habits. But manufactures, by inspiring a taste for comforts, tend to promote a favorable change in these habits, and in this way perhaps counterbalance all their disadvantages. The laboring classes of society, in nations merely agricultural, are generally on the whole poorer than in manufacturing nations, though less subject to those occasional variations which among manufacturers often produce the most severe distress.

There are two chapters in Malthus's second volume devoted to the consideration of the Agricultural and Commercial Systems about which so much was written by his contemporaries. Mr. Malthus says in Chapter VIII. that there are none of the definitions of the wealth of a state that are not liable to some objections. If the gross produce of the land be taken as indicating wealth, it is clear that this may increase very rapidly whilst the nation is very poor, and, wealth again may increase without tending to increase the funds for the

maintenance of labor and population. "Whichever of these definitions is adopted, the position of the economists will remain true, that the surplus produce of the cultivators is the great fund which ultimately pays all not employed in the land. Throughout the whole world the number of manufacturers, of proprietors, and of persons engaged in the various civil and military professions must be exactly proportional to the surplus produce, and cannot in the nature of things increase beyond it. If the earth had been so niggardly of her produce as to oblige all her inhabitants to labor for it, no manufacturer or idle persons could ever have existed. But her first intercourse with man was a voluntary present, not very large indeed, but sufficient as a fund for his subsistence, till by the proper exercise of his faculties he could produce a greater. In proportion as the labor and ingenuity of man increased, again, the land has increased this surplus produce; leisure has been given to a greater number of persons to employ themselves in all the inventions which embellish civilised life; and, although in its turn, the desire to profit by these inventions has greatly contributed to stimulate the cultivators to increase their surplus produce; yet the order of precedence is clearly the surplus produce, because the funds for the subsistence of the manufacturer must be advanced to him before he can complete his work."

"In the history of the world," says Malthus, "the nations whose wealth has been derived principally from manufactures and commerce, have been perfectly ephemeral beings, compared with those whose wealth has been agriculture. It is in the nature of things that a state which subsists upon a revenue furnished by other countries, must be infinitely more exposed to all the accidents of time and chance, than one which produces its own. No error is more frequent than that of mistaking effects for causes. We are so blinded by the shrewdness of commerce and manufactures, as to believe that they are almost the sole cause of the wealth, power, and prosperity of England; but perhaps they may be more justly considered as the consequence, than the cause of the wealth. According to the definition of the economists, which considers only the produce of land, England is the richest country in Europe, in proportion to her size. Her system of agriculture is beyond comparison better, and consequently, her surplus produce is more considerable. France is very greatly superior to England in extent of territory and population; but when the surplus produce, or disposable revenue of the two nations are com-

pared, the superiority of France almost vanishes. According to the returns lately made of the population of England and Wales, it appears that the number of persons employed in agriculture is considerably less than a fifth part of the whole."

This was written by Malthus in 1806, and it is curious to contrast the state of matters which now exists in the United Kingdom. In 1881 she consumed 1,740,000 tons of meat, and only produced 1,090,000 of these herself. She also consumed 607 millions of bushels of grain, and produced only 322 millions of these, so that, although her agricultural skill has greatly increased since the days of Malthus, she imports nearly half of her grain and one-third of her meat supplies.

Malthus was of opinion that the National Debt of England was chiefly injurious because it absorbed the redundancy of commercial capital and kept up the rate of interest, thus preventing capital from overflowing upon the soil. He thought that thus a large mortgage had been established on the lands of England, the interest of which was drawn from the payment of productive labor, and dedicated to the support of idle consumers. "It must be allowed, therefore, upon the whole, that our commerce has not done so much for our agriculture, as our agriculture has done for our commerce; and that the improved system of cultivation which has taken place, in spite of considerable discouragements, creates yearly a surplus produce which enables the country, with but little assistance, to support so vast a body of people engaged in pursuits unconnected with the land."

About the middle of the eighteenth century, England, says our author, was genuinely, and in the strict sense of the economists, an agricultural nation. With London containing a population of more than four millions, and our other immense cities, this description of England is now quite out of place.

About the middle of the last century, says Malthus, we were genuinely, and in the strict sense of the economists, an agricultural nation. "We have now, however, slipped out of the agricultural system into a state in which the commercial system clearly predominates; and there is but too much reason to fear that even our consumers and manufacturers will ultimately feel the disadvantage of the change. When a country in average years grows more wheat than it consumes, and is in the habit of exporting a part of it, those great variations of price which from the competition of commercial wealth, often produce lasting effects, cannot occur to the same

extent. The wages of labour can never rise very much above the common price in other commercial countries; and under such circumstances England would have nothing to fear from the fullest and most open competition."

Our author thinks (chap. ix. book iii.) that if we were to lower the price of labour by encouraging the import of foreign corn, we should probably aggravate our evils. The decline in our agriculture would be certain. The British grower could not, in his own markets, stand the competition of foreign growers, in average years. Arable lands of a moderate quality would hardly pay the expenses of cultivation. Rich soils alone would yield a rent. Round our towns the appearance would be the same as usual; but in the interior of the country much of the land would be neglected, and almost universally, where it was practicable, pasture would take the place of tillage. This state of things would continue till the equilibrium was restored, either by the fall of British rent and wages, or an advance in foreign corn, or, what is more probable, by the union of both causes. But a period would have elapsed of considerable relative encouragement to manufactures, and relative discouragement to agriculture. A certain portion of capital would be taken from the land, and when the equilibrium was at length restored, the nation would probably be found dependent upon foreign supplies for a great portion of its subsistence: and unless some particular cause were to occasion a foreign demand greater than the home demand, its independence, in this respect, would not be recovered. In the natural course of things, a country which depends for a considerable part of its supply of corn upon its poorer neighbours may expect to see this supply gradually diminish, as those countries increase in riches and population, and have less surplus produce to spare.

This last remark of Malthus has been verified of late years in Europe, for countries from which we used some few years back to receive a considerable amount of our supplies of meat and grain, have now become competitors with us for supplies of these articles from the United States and Australasia. And for other countries his further remark holds true, that the political relations of such a country may expose it, during a war, to have that part of its supply of provisions which it derives from foreign states suddenly stopped or greatly diminished; an event which could not take place without producing the most calamitous effects. "A nation," he continues, "in which agricultural wealth predominates, though it may

not produce at home such a surplus of luxuries and conveniences as the commercial nation, and may therefore be exposed possibly to some want of these commodities, has, on the other hand, a surplus of that article which is essential to the well-being of the whole state, and is therefore secure from want in what is of the greatest importance. And if we cannot be so sure of the supply of what we derive from others, as of what we produce at home, it seems to be an advantageous policy in a nation whose territory will allow of it, to secure a surplus of that commodity, a deficiency of which would strike most deeply at its happiness and prosperity."

Malthus held that there is no branch of trade more profitable to a country, even in a commercial point of view, than the sale of rude produce. And here he seems to have disagreed with Adam Smith's views. That illustrious writer on Wealth observes that a trading and manufacturing country exports what can subsist and accommodate but very few, and imports the subsistence and accommodation of a great number. The other exports the subsistence and accommodation of a great number, and imports that of a very few only. The inhabitants in the one must enjoy, said Adam Smith, a much greater quantity of subsistence than what their own land, in the actual state of cultivation, could afford. The inhabitants of the other must always enjoy a much smaller quantity.

Malthus demurs to much of this argument of Adam Smith. For, says he, "though the manufacturing nation may export a commodity which, in its actual shape, can only subsist and accommodate a very few, yet it must be recollected that in order to prepare this commodity for exportation, a considerable part of the revenue of the country has been employed in subsisting and accommodating a great number of workmen. And with regard to the subsistence and accommodation which the other nation exports, whether it be of a great or a small number, it is certainly no more than sufficient to replace the subsistence that has been consumed in the manufacturing nation, together with the profits of the master manufacturer and merchant, which probably, are not so great as the profits of the farmer and the merchant in the agricultural nation; and, though it may be true that the inhabitants of the manufacturing nation enjoy a greater quantity of subsistence than what their own lands in the actual state of their cultivation could afford, yet an inference in favour of the manufacturing system by no means follows, because the adoption of the one or the other system will make the greatest difference in their

actual state of cultivation. If, during the course of a century, two landed nations were to pursue these two different systems, that is, if one of them were regularly to export manufacture and import subsistence, and the other to export subsistence and import manufacture, there would be no comparison at the end of the period between the state of cultivation in the two countries; and no doubt could rationally be entertained that the country which exported its raw produce would be able to subsist and accommodate a much larger population than the other."

It is a matter, says our author, of very little comparative importance, whether we are fully supplied with broadcloth, linens, and muslins, or even with tea, sugar, and coffee, and no rational politician therefore would think of proposing a bounty on such commodities. "But it is certainly a matter of the very highest importance, whether we are fully supplied with food; and if a bounty would produce such a supply, the most liberal economist might be justified in proposing it, considering food as a commodity distinct from all others, and pre-eminently valuable."





## CHAPTER XI.

**I**N Chapter X. Mr. Malthus treats of bounties on the exportation of corn. He sets out by observing that according to the general principles of political economy, it cannot be doubted, that it is for the interest of the civilised world that each nation should purchase its commodities wherever they can be had the cheapest.

"During the seventeenth century, and indeed the whole period of our history previous to it, the prices of wheat were subject to great fluctuations, and the average price was very high. For fifty years before the year 1700, the average price of wheat per quarter was £3 0s. 11d., and before 1650 it was £6 8s. 10d. From the time of the completion of the corn laws in 1700 and 1706, the prices became extraordinarily steady, and the average price for forty years previous to the year 1750, sunk as low as £1 16s. per quarter. This was the period of our greatest exportations. In 1757 the laws were suspended, and in 1773 they were totally altered. The exports of corn have since been regularly decreasing, and the imports increasing. The average price of wheat for the forty years ending in 1800, was £2 9s. 5d., and for the last five years of this period £3 6s. 6d. During this last term the balance of the imports of all sorts of grain is estimated at 2,938,357."

Mr. Malthus observes that it is totally contrary to the habits and practice of farmers to save the superfluity of six or seven years. Great practical inconvenience generally attends the keeping of so large a reserved store. Difficulties often occur from a want of proper accommodation for it. It is at all times liable to damage from vermin and other causes. When very large it is apt to be viewed with a jealous and grudging eye by the common people. And in general, the farmer may either not be able to remain so long without the returns, or may not be willing to employ so considerable a capital in a way in which the returns must necessarily be distant and precarious.

Mr. Malthus was in favour of a bounty on the exportation of corn, because the effect of such a bounty was to repress slightly the increase of population in years of plenty, whilst it en-

couraged it comparatively in years of scarcity. This effect, he maintained, was one of the greatest advantages which could possibly occur to a society, and contributed more to the happiness of the labouring poor than could easily be conceived by those who had not deeply considered the subject. "In the whole compass of human events," he says, "I doubt if there be a more fruitful source of misery, or one more invariably productive of disastrous consequences, than a sudden start of population from two or three years of plenty, which must necessarily be repressed on the first return of scarcity, or even of average crops." From 1637 to 1700, both inclusive, the average price of corn, according to Adam Smith, was £2 11s.; yet in 1681 the growing price was only £1 8s. This high average price, according to Malthus, would not proportionally encourage the cultivation of corn. Though the farmer might feel very sanguine during one or two years of high price, and project many improvements, yet the glut in the market which would follow, would depress him in the same degree, and destroy all his projects. Sometimes, indeed, a year of high prices really tends to impoverish the land, and prepare the way for future scarcity.

In a foot-note in page 264, Chapter X., Mr. Malthus makes the remark that, "On account of the tendency of population to increase in proportion to the means of subsistence, it had been supposed by some that there would always be a sufficient demand at home for any quantity of corn which could be grown. But this is an error. It is undoubtedly true that if the farmers could gradually increase their growth of corn to any extent, and could sell it sufficiently cheap, a population would arrive at home to demand the whole of it. But in this case, the great increase of demand arises solely from the cheapness, and must therefore be totally of a different nature from such a demand as, in the actual circumstances of this country, would encourage an increased supply. If the makers of superfine broadcloth would sell their commodity for a shilling a yard, instead of a guinea, it cannot be doubted that the demand would increase more than tenfold, but the certainty of such an increase of demand, in such a case, would have no tendency whatever, in the actual circumstances of any known country, to encourage the manufacture of broad cloths."

In page 267 Mr. Malthus adverts to what has recently been commented upon by a great French statistician, Mr. Maurice Block, viz.: the danger of a country becoming too dependent on others for its supplies of food. "A rich and commercial

nation is by the natural course of things led more to pasture than to tillage, and is tempted to become daily more dependent upon others for its supplies of corn. If all the nations of Europe could be considered as one great country, and if any one state could be as sure of its supplies from others, as the pasture district of a particular state are from the corn districts in their neighbourhood, there would be no harm in this dependence, and no person would think of proposing corn laws. But can we safely consider Europe in this light? The fortunate condition of this country, and the excellence of its laws and government, exempt it, above any other nation, from foreign invasion and domestic tumult, and it is a pardonable love for one's country, which under such circumstances produces an unwillingness to expose it, in so important a point as the supply of its principal food, to share in the dangers and chances which may happen on the Continent. How would the miseries of France have been aggravated during the revolution if she had been dependent on foreign countries for the support of two or three millions of her people."

It is instructive to read what was thought might be the magnitude of our future imports of wheat in 1806. In page 268 Mr. Malthus writes: "We can hardly doubt that in the course of some years we shall draw from America, and the nations bordering on the Baltic, as much as two millions of quarters of wheat, besides other corn, the support of above two millions of people. If under these circumstances, any commercial discussion, or other dispute, were to arise with these nations, with what a weight of power they would have to negotiate! Not the whole British Navy could offer a more convincing argument than the single threat of shutting all their ports. I am not unaware that in general, we may securely depend upon people not acting directly contrary to their interest. But this consideration, all powerful as it is, will sometimes yield voluntarily to national indignation, and it is sometimes forced to yield to the resentment of a sovereign. It is of sufficient weight in practice when applied to manufactures; because a delay in their sale is not of such immediate consequence. But in the case of corn, a delay of three or four months may produce the most complicated misery; and from the great bulk of corn, it will generally be in the power of the sovereign to execute almost completely his resentful purpose." This is the argument of Mr. Block, with respect to our dependence on the United States for so much of our food supplies. He remarks that it might easily

happen that some party in the United States might take to prohibiting the export of corn, and in such a case there can be no doubt that the people of this country would at once be plunged into the severest trouble with respect to their food supplies. A war with the United States is of course most unlikely, too, but alas ! even such a catastrophe is possible in the present position of human affairs.

The argument made use of by M. Maurice Block, that, in times of war, Great Britain may possibly in some future time be in danger of seeing much of its population starved from want of food supplies, was anticipated by Malthus in a foot note in chapter x. He there says :—"I should be misunderstood if, from anything I have said in the four last chapters, I should be considered as not sufficiently aware of the advantages derived from commerce and manufactures. I look upon them as the most distinguishing characteristics of civilization, the most obvious and striking marks of the improvement of society, and calculated to enlarge our enjoyments, and add to the sum of human happiness. No great surplus of agriculture could exist without them, and if it did exist, it would be comparatively of very little value. But still they are rather the ornaments and embellishments of the political structure than its foundations. While these foundations are perfectly secure, we cannot be too solicitous to make all the apartments convenient and elegant : but if there be the slightest reason to fear that the foundations themselves may give way, it seems to be folly to continue directing our principal attention to the less essential parts. There has never yet been an instance in history of a large nation continuing with undiminished vigour to support four or five millions of its people on imported corn ; nor do I believe that there ever will be such an instance in future. England is, undoubtedly, from her insular situation and commanding navy, the most likely to form an exception to this rule ; but in spite even of the peculiar advantages of England, it appears to me clear that if she continues yearly to increase her importations of corn, she cannot ultimately escape that decline which seems to be the natural and necessary consequence of excessive commercial wealth. I am not now speaking of the next twenty or thirty years, but of the next two or three hundred. And though we are little in the habit of looking so far forward, yet it may be questioned whether we are not bound in duty to make some exertions to avoid a system which must necessarily terminate in the weakness and decline of our posterity. But

whether we make any practical application of such a discussion or not, it is curious to contemplate the cause of those reverses in the fate of empires, which so frequently changed the face of the world in past times, and may be expected to produce similar, though perhaps not such violent changes in future. War was undoubtedly, in ancient times, the principal cause of these changes; but it frequently only finished a work which excess of luxury and agriculture had begun. Foreign invasions, or internal convulsions, produced but a temporary and comparatively slight effect upon such countries as Lombardy, Tuscany, and Flanders, but are fatal to such states as Holland and Hamburg, and though the commerce and manufactures of England will probably always be supported in a great degree by her agriculture, yet that part which is not so supported will still remain subject to the reverses of dependent states."

Writing in 1806, Mr. Malthus adds:—"We should recollect that it is only within the last twenty or thirty years that we have become an importing nation. In so short a period it could hardly be expected that the evils of the system should be perceptible. We have, however, already felt some of its inconveniences; and if we persevere at it, its evil consequences may by no means be a matter of remote speculation."

In the eleventh chapter of his third book our author treats of the prevailing errors respecting population and plenty, and notices some of the arguments which have this very year (1883) been put forward, over and over again, by the disciples of Mr. Henry George, an American writer who has acquired a sudden celebrity for his work on "Progress and Poverty." "It has been observed," says Mr. Malthus, "that many countries at the period of their greatest degree of populousness have lived in the greatest plenty, and have been able to export corn; but at other periods, when their population was very low, have lived in continual poverty and want, and have been obliged to import corn. Egypt, Palestine, Rome, Sicily, and Spain are cited as particular examples of this fact: and it has been inferred that an increase of population in any state, not cultivated to the utmost, will tend rather to augment than diminish the relative plenty of the whole society; and that, as Lord Kaimes observes, a country cannot easily become too populous for agriculture, because agriculture has the signal property of producing food in proportion to the number of consumers. .... The prejudices on the subject of population bear a very striking resemblance to the

old prejudices about specie, and we know how slowly and with what difficulty these last have yielded to juster conceptions. Politicians, observing that states which were powerful and prosperous were almost invariably populous, have mistaken an effect for a cause, and concluded that their population was the cause of their prosperity, instead of their prosperity being the cause of their population; as the old political economists concluded, that the abundance of specie was the cause of national wealth, instead of the effect of it. The annual produce of the land and labour, in both of these instances, became in consequence a secondary consideration, and its increase, it was conceived, would naturally follow the increase of specie in the one case, or of population in the other. Yet surely the folly of endeavouring to increase the quantity of specie in any country without an increase of the commodities which it is to circulate, is not greater than that of endeavouring to increase the number of people without an increase of the food which is to maintain them; and it will be found that the level above which no human laws can raise the population of a country, is a limit more fixed and impassable than the limit to the accumulation of specie."

"Ignorance and despotism seem to have no tendency to destroy the passions which prompt to increase; but they effectually destroy the checks to it from reason and foresight. The improvident barbarian who thinks only of his present wants, or the miserable peasant, who, from his political situation, feels little security of reaping what he has sown, will seldom be deterred from gratifying his passion by the prospect of inconvenience, which cannot be expected to press upon him under three or four years. Industry cannot exist without foresight and security. Even poverty itself, which appears to be the great spur to industry, when it has passed certain limits almost ceases to operate. The indigence which is hopeless destroys all vigorous exertion, and confines the efforts to what is sufficient for bare existence. It is the hope of bettering our condition, and the fear of want rather than want itself, that is the best stimulus to industry; and its most constant and best directed efforts will almost invariably be found among a class of people above the class of the wretchedly poor."

This remark of Malthus is a reply to those who say that if food were cheaper and the poor better fed, they would only work as much as was needed to get a scanty supply of food. Experience in our colonies and in the United States shows that the fear of want is an incentive to make the early colonists of a

fertile country fervid in their desire to obtain wealth.

"That an increase of population," says Malthus, "when it follows in its natural order, is both a great positive good in itself, and absolutely necessary to a further increase in the annual produce of the land and labour of any country, I should be the last to deny. The only question is, What is the natural order of this progress? In this point, Sir James Stewart appears to me to have fallen into an error. He determines that multiplication is the efficient cause of agriculture, and not agriculture of multiplication; but though it may be allowed that the increase of people beyond what could easily subsist on the natural fruits of the earth, first prompted man to till the ground: and that the view of maintaining a family, or of obtaining some valuable consideration in exchange for the products of agriculture, still operates as the principal stimulus to cultivation; yet it is clear that these products, in their actual state, must be beyond the lowest wants of the existing population before any permanent increase can possibly be supported. We know that a multiplication of births has in numberless instances taken place, which has produced no effect upon agriculture, and has merely been followed by an increase of diseases: but perhaps there is no instance where a permanent increase of agriculture has not a permanent increase of population, somewhere or other. Consequently agriculture may with more propriety be termed the efficient cause of population, than population of agriculture, though they certainly react upon each other, and are mutually necessary to each other's support."

"The author of 'L'Ami des Hommes' (Mirabeau's father), in a chapter on the effects of a decay in agriculture upon population, acknowledges that he had fallen into a fundamental error in considering population as the source of revenue: and that he was afterwards convinced that revenue was the source of population. From a want of attention to this most important distinction, statesmen, in pursuit of the desirable object of population, have been led to encourage early marriages, to reward the fathers of families, and to disgrace celibacy; but this, as the same author justly observes, is to dress and water a piece of land without sowing it, yet to expect a crop." It is curious that so backward is speculation on this question even in modern France, the most practical Neo-Malthusian country in Europe, that this year has already seen two proposals made by learned Frenchmen to encourage marriage and large families. The first emanated from the

son of one of the most distinguished surgeons of Paris, Dr. Richet; the other from a member of the French *Corps Legislatif*.

"Among the other prejudices," says Malthus, "which have prevailed on the subject of population, it has been generally thought that while there is either waste among the rich, or land remaining uncultivated in any country, the complaints for want of food cannot be justly founded, or at least that the presence of distress among the poor is to be attributed to the ill-conduct of the higher classes of society and the bad management of the land. The real effect, however, of these two circumstances is merely to narrow the limit of the actual population; but they have little or no influence on what may be called the average pressure of distress on the poorer members of society. If our ancestors had been so frugal and industrious, and had transmitted such habits to their posterity, that nothing superfluous was consumed by the higher classes, no horses were used for pleasure, and no land was left uncultivated, a striking difference would appear in the state of the actual population, but probably none whatever in the state of the lower classes of people, with respect to the price of labour and the facility of supporting a family. The waste among the rich, and the horses kept for pleasure, have indeed a little the effect of the consumption of grain in distilleries, noticed before with regard to China. On the supposition that the food consumed in this manner may be withdrawn on the occasion of a scarcity, and be applied to the relief of the poor, they operate certainly as far as they go, like granaries which are only opened at the time that they are wanted, and must therefore tend rather to benefit than to injure the lower classes of society.

"With regard to uncultivated land," says our author, "it is evident that its effect upon the poor is neither to injure nor to benefit them. The sudden cultivation of it would undoubtedly tend to improve their condition for a time, and the neglect of lands before cultivated will certainly make their situation worse for a certain period; but when no changes of this kind are going forward the effect of uncultivated land on the lower class operates merely like the possession of a smaller territory. It is indeed a point of very great importance to the poor whether a country is in the habit of exporting or importing corn; but this point is not necessarily connected with the complete or incomplete cultivation of the whole territory, but depends upon the proportion of the surplus produce to those



who are supported by it; and in fact this proportion is generally the greatest in countries which have not yet completed the cultivation of their territory.

"We should not, therefore, be too ready to make inferences against the internal economy of a country from the appearance of uncultivated heaths, without other evidence. But the fact is, that no country has ever reached, or probably ever will reach, its highest possible acme of produce, it appears always as if the want of industry, or the ill-direction of that industry, was the actual limit to a further increase of produce and population; and not the absolute refusal of nature to yield any more; but a man who is locked up in a room may be fairly said to be confined by the walls of it, though he may never touch them; and with regard to the principle of population, it is never the question whether a country will produce *any more*, but whether it may be made to produce a sufficiency to keep pace with an unchecked increase of people. In China the question is not, whether a certain additional quantity of rice might be raised by improved culture, but whether such an addition could be counted on during the next twenty-five years as would be sufficient to support an additional three hundred millions of people. And in this country it is not the question whether, by cultivating all our commons, we could raise considerably more than at present: but whether we could raise sufficient for a population of twenty millions in the next twenty-five years and forty millions in the next fifty years.

"The allowing of the produce of the earth to be absolutely unlimited scarcely removes the weight of a hair from the argument, which depends entirely upon the differently increasing ratios of population and food; and all that the most enlightened governments and the most persevering and best guided efforts of industry can do, is to make the necessary checks to population act more equably, and in a direction to produce the least evil; but to remove them is a task absolutely hopeless."

We have now arrived at the last part of Malthus's great essay on population. In Book IV. our author speaks in chapter i. of future prospects of the removal or mitigation of the evils arising from the principle of population. He shows that we must submit to the population law as an ultimate law of nature, and that all that remains for us is, how we may check population with the least prejudice to the virtue and happiness of human society. He claims for moral restraint that it is the least harmful of all the checks. "If we be intemperate in

eating and drinking (he says) we are disordered ; if we indulge the transports of anger, we seldom fail to commit acts of which we afterwards repent ; if we multiply too fast, we die miserably of poverty and contagious diseases.....The kind of food, and the mode of preparing it, best suited for the purposes of nutriment and the gratification of the palate, &c., were not pointed out to the attention of man at once, but were the slow and late result of experience, and of the admonitions received by repeated failures."

Mr. Malthus then, following Hippocrates, points out that in the history of every epidemic, it has almost invariably been observed, that the lower classes of people, whose food was poor and insufficient, and who lived crowded together in small and dirty houses, were the principal victims. "In what other manner can nature point out to us, that if we increase too fast for the means of subsistence, so as to render it necessary for a considerable part of the society to live in this miserable manner, we have offended against one of her laws?" After the desire of food, the most powerful and general of our desires is passion between the sexes, taken in an enlarged sense. Mr. Godwin had said, in one of his works: "Strip the commerce of the sexes of all its attendant circumstances, and it would be generally despised." To this Mr. Malthus replies, that Godwin might as well say to a man who admired trees: "Strip them of their spreading branches and lovely foliage, and what beauty can you see in a bare pole?" "The evening meal, the warm house, and the comfortable fire-side would lose half of their interest if we were to exclude the idea of some object of affection with whom they were to be shared."

Few or none, then, of our human passions would admit of being greatly diminished, without narrowing the sources of good more powerfully than the sources of evil. The fecundity of the human species is, in some respects, a distinct consideration from the passion between the sexes. It is strong and general, and apparently would not admit of any very considerable diminution without being inadequate for its object. "It is of the very utmost importance to the happiness of mankind that they should not increase too fast ; but it does not appear that the object to be accomplished would admit of any very considerable diminution in the desire for marriage. It is clearly the duty of each individual not to marry until he has a prospect of supporting his children ; but it is at the same time to be wished that he should retain undiminished his desire for marriage, in order that he may exert himself to realise

this prospect, and be stimulated to make provision for the support of greater numbers.

"Our obligation not to marry till we have a fair prospect of being able to support our children will appear to deserve the attention of the moralist, if it can be proved that an attention to these obligations is of more effect in the prevention of misery than all the other virtues combined; and that if, in violation of this duty, it was the general custom to follow the first impulse of nature, and marry at the age of puberty, the universal prevalence of every known virtue in the greatest conceivable degree would fail of rescuing society from the most wretched and deplorable state of want, and all the diseases and famines which usually accompany it."

In chapter ii. Mr. Malthus speaks of the effects which would result to society from the prevalence of this virtue of moral restraint. "No man whose earnings were only sufficient to maintain two children, would put himself in a situation in which he might have to maintain four or five, however he might be prompted to it by the passion of love. The interval between the age of puberty and the period at which each individual might venture to marry must, according to this view be passed in strict chastity; because the law of chastity cannot be violated without producing evil. The effect of anything like a promiscuous intercourse which prevents the birth of children, is evidently to weaken the best affections of the heart, and in a very marked manner to degrade the female character. And any other intercourse would, without improper arts, bring as many children into society as marriage, with a much greater probability of their becoming a burden to it."

The phrase, "improper arts," is the only point on which the so-styled Neo-Malthusians differ from Malthus. To his modern disciples it seems abundantly proved, from the experience of France and elsewhere, that late marriage is not what must be trusted to to check population; but a restraint in the size of families. Mr. Malthus, indeed, seems himself to recognise the evils of late marriages, for he writes: "The late marriages at present are, indeed, principally confined to the men; and there are few, however advanced in life they may be, who, if they determine to marry, do not fix their choice on a very young wife. A young woman, without fortune, when she has passed her twenty-fifth year, begins to fear, and with reason, that she may lead a life of celibacy..... If women could look forward with just confidence to marriage at twenty-eight or thirty, I fully believe that, if the matter were left to them.

for choice, they would clearly prefer waiting till this period, to the being involved in all the cares of a large family at twenty-five."

Lord Derby, some years ago, truly observed that great emperors did not like their subjects to be too well off. This remark may have been a citation from Malthus, where he says: "The ambition of princes would want instruments of destruction, if the distresses of the lower classes of their subjects did not drive them under their standards. A recruiting sergeant always prays for a bad harvest and want of employment, or in other words, a redundant population." Mr. Malthus points out that a society with a low birth rate will be extremely powerful both in war and peace. One of the principal encouragements to an offensive war would be removed, and there would be greater freedom from political dissensions at home. "Indisposed to a war of offence, in a war of defence such a society would be strong as a rock of adamant. Where every family possessed the necessaries of life or plenty, and a decent portion of its comforts and conveniences, there could not exist that hope of change, or at best that melancholy and disheartening indifference to it, which sometimes prompts the lower classes of people to say—Let what will come, we cannot be worse off than we are now."

In chapter iii. Mr. Malthus speaks rather gloomily as to the prospect of Society adopting his recommendation of late marriages, "I believe (he says) that few of my readers can be less sanguine of expectations of any great change in the general conduct of men on this subject than I am." He proposes it, it seems, in order chiefly to vindicate the character of the Deity! This is at present known by all scientific inquirers to be a fallacious argument; and we cannot but contrast with our great author's vacillating doctrine, the clear line of duty laid down by the greatest of his followers, Mr. J. S. Mill, when he says that the happiness of society is quite attainable, if only it becomes a rule of morals that the producing of large families in Europe should be looked upon as a vice.


"Almost everything that has hitherto been done for the poor has tended, as if with solicitous care, to throw a veil of obscurity over this subject, and to hide from them the true cause of their poverty. A man has always been told that to raise up subjects for his king and country is a meritorious act. In an endeavour to raise the proportion of the quantity of provisions to the number of consumers in any country, our

attention would naturally be first directed to the increasing of the absolute quantity of provisions, but finding that, as fast as we did this, the numbers of consumers more than kept pace with it, and that with all our exertions we were still as far as ever behind, we should be convinced that our efforts directed in this way would never succeed. It would appear to be setting the tortoise to catch the hare. Finding therefore, that from the laws of nature we could not proportion the food to the population, our next attempt should naturally be to proportion the population to the food. If we can persuade the hare to go to sleep, the tortoise may have some chance of overtaking her."

In chapter iv., our author replies to some objections. Some of his critics had said that if his advice were followed, the market would be rather understocked with labour. To this Malthus observes that "a market overstocked with labour, and an ample remuneration to each labourer, are objects perfectly incompatible with each other. In the annals of the world they have never existed together; and to couple them even in imagination betrays a gross ignorance of the simplest principles of political economy." Mr. Malthus then replies to the oft repeated futurity argument as follows: "I can easily conceive that this country, with a proper direction of the national industry, might, in the course of some centuries, contain two or three times its present population, and yet every man in the kingdom be better paid and clothed than he is at present."

"While the springs of industry continue in vigor, and a sufficient part of that industry is directed to agriculture, we need be under no apprehension of a deficient population; and nothing perhaps would tend so strongly to create a spirit of industry and economy among the poor, as a thorough knowledge that their happiness must always depend principally upon themselves; and that if they obey their passions in opposition to their reason, or be not industrious and frugal while they are single men, and save a sum for the common contingencies of the married state, they must expect to suffer the natural evils which Providence has prepared for those who disobey its admonitions."

This, then, is the main argument of our author; but, as we have seen, he fears lest he will not be listened to by the masses, and also sees clearly enough that his advice to delay the marriage day until funds have been reserved to meet all demands on the married pair, is not unlikely to lead to other



evils. "A third objection which may be started (he says) to this plan, and the only one which appears to me to bear any kind of plausibility is, that by endeavoring to urge the duty of moral restraint on the poor, we may increase the quantity of sexual vice."

Malthus finds considerable difficulty in meeting this attack, and few will be found who will be satisfied with the following reply to this objection. "I should be extremely sorry to say anything which could be either remotely or directly construed unfavorably to the cause of virtue; but I certainly cannot think that the vices which relate to the sex are the only vices which are to be considered in a moral question; or that they are even the greatest and most degrading to the human character. They can rarely or never be committed without producing such offences somewhere or other, and therefore ought always to be strongly repudiated; but there are other vices, the effects of which are still more pernicious; and there are other situations which lead more certainly to moral offences than the refraining from marriage."

All of this is beside the question; and our author fell into this kind of argument precisely because he had no experience as we moderns have of marriage with small families. This alone of all the alternatives gives the human race a chance of comfort, love, and family joys. Were it the custom for all in a country like England to consider it immoral to have a family exceeding four children, there might doubtless be hope that all might lead a virtuous life; but Mr. Malthus' plan of late marriage necessarily condemns many women to celibacy, and, as he admits, tends to the degradation of numbers of other women.


Our author continues: "Powerful as may be the temptations to a breach of chastity, I am inclined to think that they are impotent, in comparison with the temptations arising from continued distress. A large class of women and many men, I have no doubt, pass a considerable part of their lives in chastity; but I believe there will be found very few who pass through the ordeal of squalid and hopeless poverty, or even of long-continued embarrassed circumstances without a considerable degradation of character.....Add to this that squalid poverty, particularly when joined with idleness, is a state the most unfavorable to character that can well be conceived. The passion is as strong, or nearly so, as in other situations, and every restraint on it from personal respect or a sense of morality is generally removed. There is a degree

of squalid poverty in which, if a girl was brought up, I should say that her being really modest at twenty was an absolute miracle. Those persons must have extraordinary minds indeed, and such as are not usually found under similar circumstances, who can continue to respect themselves when no other person whatever respects them. If the children thus brought up were even to marry at twenty, it is probable that they would have passed some years in vicious habits before that period."

Had Mr. Malthus been alive at this moment, and travelled as he did in his lifetime through the rural districts of France, he would have been the first to admit that the French have given the only solution of the problem he states so clearly, that has ever been given by any nation.

"If (says our author) statesmen will not encourage late marriages, but rather the opposite, then to act consistently they should facilitate, instead of foolishly and vainly endeavoring to impede, the operations of nature in causing a great infantile mortality. Instead of recommending cleanliness to the poor, they should cultivate contrary habits. If by these and similar means, the annual mortality were increased from 1 in 36 or 40, to 1 in 18 or 20, we might probably every one of us marry at the age of puberty, and yet few be absolutely starved. If, however, we all marry at this age, and yet still continue our exertions to impede the operations of nature, we may rest assured that all our efforts will be vain. Nature will not, and cannot be defeated in her purposes. The necessary mortality must come, in some form or other: and the extirpation of one disease will only be the signal for the birth of another perhaps more fatal. We cannot lower the waters of rivers by pressing them down in different places, which must necessarily make them rise somewhere else; the only way in which we can hope to effect our purpose is by drawing them off."

"In a country which keeps up its population at a certain standard, if the average number of marriages and births be given, it is evident that the average number of deaths will also be given: and to use Dr. Heberden's metaphor, the channels through which the stream of mortality is constantly flowing will always convey off a given quantity. Now, if we stop up any of these channels, it must be perfectly clear that the stream of mortality must run with greater force through some of the other channels: that is, if we eradicate some diseases, others will become proportionally more fatal."



"Dr. Heberden, (says Malthus) draws a striking picture of the favorable change observed in the health of the people of England, and greatly attributes it to the improvements which have gradually taken place, not only in London but in all great towns; and in the manner of living throughout the kingdom, particularly in respect to cleanliness and ventilation. But these causes would not have produced the effect observed, if they had not been accompanied by an increase of the preventive check; and probably the spread of cleanliness, and better mode of living, which then began to prevail, by spreading more generally a decent and useful pride, principally contributed to this increase. The diminution in the number of marriages, however, was not sufficient to make up for the great decrease of mortality, from the extinction of the plague, and the striking reduction of the deaths from the dysentery. While these, and some other diseases became evanescent, consumption, palsy, apoplexy, gout, lunacy and the small-pox became more mortal. The widening of these drains was necessary to carry off the population which still remained redundant, notwithstanding the increased operation of the preventive check, and the part which was annually disposed of, and enabled to subsist by the increase of agriculture."

Mr. Malthus then adds: "For my own part, I feel not the slightest doubt, that if the introduction of the cow-pox should extirpate the small-pox, and yet the number of marriages continue the same, we shall find a very perceptible difference in the increased mortality of some other diseases. Nothing could prevent this effect but a sudden start in our agriculture; and should this take place, which I fear we have not much reason to expect, it will not be owing to the number of children saved from death by the cow-pox inoculations, but to the alarms occasioned among the people of property by the late scarcities, and to the increased gains of farmers, which have been so absurdly reprobated. I am strongly, however, inclined to believe, that the number of marriages will not in this case remain the same; but that the gradual light which may be expected to be thrown on this interesting topic of human inquiry, will teach us how to make the extinction of a mortal disorder, a real blessing to us, and a real improvement in the general health and happiness of the society."

In these admirable remarks Malthus points out that whenever we make improvements in the science of health, we must be contented to lessen the birth-rate, if we would really secure the benefits we might expect. Thus, if drainage, good water



supply, and the extirpation of fevers are to be of service to us, it must be that we are determined to have fewer children. For, if we have an equally high birth-rate, and no great addition to our food supplies from abroad or from our own soil, we must die inevitably of some other chronic, although different, maladies than those produced by bad drainage and fevers, or small-pox. In no case can we have a birth-rate of 40 per 1,000 in an old country, without a high death-rate.

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## CHAPTER XII.

IN Chapter VI. of Book IV. Mr. Malthus treats of the effects of the knowledge of the principal cause of poverty on Civil Liberty, observing at the outset that it may appear to some that a doctrine which attributes the greatest part of the sufferings of the lower classes of society exclusively to themselves, is unfavorable to the cause of liberty, affording, it may be said, a tempting opportunity to governments of oppressing their subjects at pleasure, and laying all the blame on the improvident habits of the poor. Our author contends that, on the other hand, the pressure of distress on the lower classes of people, with the habit of attributing the distress to their rulers, appears to him to be the rock of defence, the castle and the guardian spirit of despotism, affording as it does to the tyrant the unanswerable plea of necessity.

"The patriot who might be called upon by the love of his country to join with heart and hand in a rising of the people for some specific attainable object or reform, if he knew that they were enlightened respecting their own situation, and would stop short when they had attained their demand, would be called upon by the same motion to submit to very great opposition rather than give the slightest countenance to a popular tumult, the members of which, at least the greatest number of them, were persuaded that the destruction of the Parliament, the Lord Mayor, and the monopoly would make bread cheap, and that a revolution would enable them all to support their families. In this case it is more the ignorance and delusion of the lower classes of people that occasions the oppression, than the actual disposition of the government to tyranny."

Mr. Malthus observes that the circulation of Paine's *Rights of Man* was said to have done great mischief among the lower

and middle classes in this country: and that might be true; but that was because Mr. Paine in many important points had shown himself totally unacquainted with the structure of society, and the different moral effects to be expected from the physical difference between this country and America. Mob<sup>s</sup> of the same description as those collections of people known by that name in Europe could not at that day exist in America. The number of people without property was, then, at that time, from the physical state of the country, comparatively small: and therefore the civil power which was needed to protect property, did not require to be so large. Mr. Paine argued that the real cause of riots was always want of happiness, and maintained that such was always due to something being wrong in the system of Government. But this is evidently not always the case. The redundant population of an old state furnishes materials for unhappiness, unknown to such a state of that of America.

Nothing would so effectually counteract the mischief caused by Mr. Paine's Rights of Man (says our author), as a general knowledge of our true rights. "What these rights are, it is not now my business to explain: but there is one right which man has generally been thought to possess, which I am confident he neither does nor can possess, a right to subsistence when his labor will not fairly purchase it. Our laws (in 1806) indeed say that he has this right, and bind the society to furnish employment and food to them who cannot get them in the regular market; but in so doing they attempt to reverse the laws of nature; and it is in consequence to be expected, not only that they should fail in their object, but that the poor who were intended to be benefited should suffer most cruelly from this inhuman deceit which is practised upon them."

Malthus adds that the Abbé Raynal had said that before all other social laws, man has a right to subsistence. "He might just as well have said that every man had a right to live 100 years. Yes! He has a right to do so, if he can. Good social laws enable truly a greater number of people to exist than could without them; but neither before nor since the institution of social laws can an unlimited number exist. Consequently, as it is impossible to feed all that might be born, it is disgraceful to promise to do so.

"If the great truths on these subjects were more generally circulated, and the lower classes could be convinced that by the laws of nature, independently of any particular institution,


except the great one of property, which is absolutely necessary in order to attain any considerable produce, no person has any claim or *right* on society for subsistence, if his labor will not purchase it, the greatest part of the mischievous declamation on the unjust institutions of society would fall powerless to the ground. If the real causes of their misery were shown to the poor, and they were taught to know how small a part of their present distress was attributable to government, discontent would be far less common.

"Again—Remove all fear from the tyranny or folly of the people, and the tyranny of government could not stand a moment. It would then appear in its proper deformity, without palliation, without pretext, without protection.

"Good governments are chiefly useful to the poorer classes, by giving them a clearer view of the necessity of some preventive check to population. And in despotic governments it is usually found that the checks to population arise more from the sickness and mortality consequent on poverty, than from any such preventive check."

Mr. Malthus contends that "the most successful supporters of tyranny are without doubt those general declaimers who attribute the distresses of the poor, and almost all the evils to which society is subject, to human institutions and the iniquity of governments. The falsity of these accusations, and the dreadful consequences that would result from their being generally admitted and acted upon, make it absolutely necessary that they should at all events be resisted: not only on account of the immediate revolutionary horrors to be expected from a movement of the people acting under such impressions, a consideration which must at all times have very great weight, but on account of the extreme probability that such a revolution would soon terminate in a much worse despotism than that which it had destroyed. Whatever may be, therefore, the intention of those indiscriminate accusations against governments, their real effect undoubtedly is to add a weight of talents and principles to the prevailing power which it would never have received otherwise."

"Under a government constructed upon the best and purest principles, and executed by men of the highest talents and integrity, the most squalid poverty and wretchedness might universally prevail from an inattention to the prudential check to population, and as this cause of unhappiness has hitherto been so little understood, that the efforts of society have always tended rather to aggravate than to lessen it, we have



the strongest reason for supposing that in all the governments with which we are acquainted, a great part of the misery to be observed among the lower classes of the people arises from this cause."

The inference, therefore, which Mr. Godwin, and in latter days Mr. Hyndman and the Democratic Federation, have drawn against governments from the unhappiness of the people is palpably unfair, and before we give a sanction to such accusations, it is a debt we owe to truth and justice, to ascertain how much of this unhappiness arises from the principle of population, and how much is fairly to be attributed to government. When this distinction has been properly made, and all the vague, indefinite, and false accusations removed, government would remain, as it ought to be, clearly responsible for the rest, and the amount of this would still be such as to make the responsibility very considerable. "Though government has but little power in the direct relief of poverty, yet its indirect influences on the prosperity of its subjects is striking and incontestible. And the reason is, that though it is comparatively impotent in its efforts to make the food of a country keep pace with an unrestricted increase of population, yet its influence is great in giving the best direction to those checks, which in some form or other must necessarily take place."

The first great requisite, says Mr. Malthus, to the growth of prudential habits is the perfect security of property, and the next perhaps is that respectability and importance which is given to the lower classes by equal laws, and the possession of some influence in the framing of them. The more excellent, then, is the government, the more does it tend to generate that prudence and elevation of sentiment by which alone in the present state of our being can poverty be avoided.

Mr. Malthus was greatly opposed to despotic government; and he remarks that it has been sometimes asserted, that the only reason why it is advantageous that the people should have some share in the government, is that a representation of the people tends best to secure the framing of good and equal laws; but that if the same object could be obtained under a despotism, the same advantage would accrue to the community. If, however, the representative system, by securing to the lower classes of society a more equal and liberal mode of treatment from their superiors, gives to each individual a greater personal respectability and a greater fear of personal degradation, it is evident that it will powerfully co-operate

with the security of property in animating the exertions of industry, and in generating habits of prudence, and thus more powerfully tend to increase the riches and prosperity of the lower classes of the community, than if the same laws had existed under a despotism.

But, says our author, though the tendency of a free constitution and a good government to diminish poverty is certain, yet its effect in this way must necessarily be indirect and slow, and very different from the immediate and direct relief which the lower classes of people are too frequently in the habit of looking forward to as the consequences of a revolution. This habit of expecting too much, and the irritation occasioned by disappointment, continually give a wrong direction to their efforts in favor of liberty, and continually tend to defeat the accomplishment of those gradual reforms in government, and that slow amelioration of the lowest classes of society, which are really attainable.

The following passage might be well studied in these days of proposed schemes for land confiscation and communism. "It is of the very highest importance, therefore, to know distinctly what government cannot do, as well as what it can do. If I were called upon to name the cause which, in my conception, had more than any other contributed to the very slow progress of freedom, so disheartening to every liberal mind, I should say that it was the confusion that had existed respecting the causes of the unhappiness and discontent which prevail in society; and the advantage which governments had been able to take, and indeed had been compelled to take, of this confusion, to confirm and strengthen their power. I cannot help thinking, therefore, that a knowledge generally circulated, that the principal cause of want and unhappiness is only indirectly connected with government, and totally beyond its power to remove; and that it depends upon the conduct of the poor themselves, would, instead of giving any advantage to government, give a great additional weight to the popular side of the question, by removing the danger with which from ignorance it is at present accompanied; and these tend in a very powerful manner to promote the cause of rational freedom."

Mr. J. S. Mill, who was more of a Socialist than Mr. Malthus and a greater optimist, admits that it would be possible for the State to ensure employment at ample wages to all that are born. But, he adds, if it does this, it is bound in self-protection, and for every purpose for which the State

exists, to see that no one should be born without its consent. That is, he seems to favor the framing of a statute directed against the production of large families.

In suggesting that it would be possible for the State to ensure employment at ample wages to all that are born, if it only takes care that too many shall not be born, Mr. Mill differs a good deal from Mr. Malthus and from many of the *laissez faire* economists of the school of Adam Smith. Persons who are great admirers of individual liberty confound, as is very often the case, the idea of freedom with that of the right to do wrong. It is quite clear that if in an old country, such as any of the European States, all classes of society were to engender as many children as is now done by the poorest and most thoughtless members, poverty would become as universal as it formerly was, when mankind were less civilised and had a very low standard of comfort. Mr. Mill and those who follow him in this contention, among whom is to be reckoned the author of the "Elements of Social Science," affirm that, although it is quite true that a grown up man or woman should be perfectly free to live his or her own life so far as relates to self-regarding actions, it is a confusion of ideas to style the bringing into life of another human being, an act purely self-regarding. When a country is over-peopled, or threatened with that greatest of all calamities, the production, it is held by these able writers, of more than a very small number of children by any couple is a gross offence against all who gain their living by toil, since the over-crowding of a country with human beings makes it very difficult for those at the bottom of society to get enough even of the coarsest food for themselves and their families, whilst life is rendered harder for all who have to gain it by services of any kind. The number of children to a family among the richer classes in France appears now to be on an average not quite two to a *family*: whereas the poorer classes in Paris and some of the less thoughtful districts of France have families of more than six on an average. London now exhibits the notable fact that, whereas in the comfortable parishes of Kensington, St. George Hanover Square, St. James Westminster, and Hampstead, the birth-rate in 1886 was not much above 21 per 1000 inhabitants annually; in the poor parishes of Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, St. George in the East, and Whitechapel the birth-rate was 38·6 per 1000 in that year, *i.e.*, nearly twice as many children are born of 1000 persons in the poor quarters as in the rich. As a consequence of this, the death-rate in the East End is to that in

the West End as 8 to 2. Mr. Mill, and in this I entirely concur with him, thinks that the State can and ought to discourage the production of large families by some social stigma, and the author of the "Elements of Social Science" thinks that some fine might be the penalty for the production of more than four children by any married pair. This he looks upon as a far juster way of checking rapid birth-rates than the Continental plan of preventing the poorest persons from marrying, since it is not marriage, he observes, but the production of large families, that the State ought to endeavor to guard against. The mere discussion in the House of Commons of such a proposition would do an immense deal of good in this and in all European States, since the poorer classes are generally anxious enough to do their duty, if they only knew what that duty was. Of course any penalty for the production of a large family should fall equally on the rich and the poor, since the miseries inflicted by the well-to-do parent, who produces a large family, on his helpless and innocent offspring, in the shape of life long celibacy, may fairly be compared with the want of food which such conduct causes among the poor. And any penalty ought to be very small, because, if not so, persons might be led to practise criminal abortion or infanticide, practices most inimical to the welfare and even the existence of society.

The existence of the Malthusian theory of population was greatly obscured during the greater part of this century by the writings of the Free Traders, many of whom, in common with the illustrious leaders of the movement, Messrs. Cobden and Bright, thought that by means of the free importation of food, poverty might be entirely put an end to. It was said by some of the most enthusiastic speakers against the Corn Laws, that if they were but abolished, the workhouses would soon disappear; and the United Kingdom would be filled with a numerous and contented population. This shows how little these eminent men had considered the immense power of multiplication of the human race. As Mr. Malthus said, the power of increasing production is, to the power of reproduction, as the speed of a tortoise is to that of a hare. The tortoise can only overtake the hare if the swifter animal fall asleep. Hence, free trade, however admirable in itself, has but little influence on the life of the poorest inhabitants of an over-crowded country. The share they get of the productions of the world will always be most meagre, so long as they increase so rapidly in number by producing families of ten or fifteen

children, and thus courting the positive check of the lower animals.

Soon after Mr. Malthus wrote his essay, it began to be noticed that in France families were much smaller, among the respectable classes, than they were in England; and Mr. Francis Place wrote a pamphlet in which he pointed this out and recommended the plan in place of the preventive check of late marriages. His pamphlet and remarks had much influence on the celebrated Robert Owen, and it is said that the latter philanthropist made known Place's views to his workmen at New Lanark, in Scotland, and it was on that account that that famous socialistic experiment succeeded so well. Mr. Robert Dale Owen, son of Robert Owen, emigrated to the United States and was ambassador to Europe from that country for some years. His pamphlet entitled "Moral Physiology" was a most eloquent plea for parental prudence, or early marriages and small families. That pamphlet was written subsequently to one written by Mr. Richard Carlile, entitled "Every Woman's Book," and also to Dr. Charles Knowlton of Boston's work, written in 1833, entitled the "Fruits of Philosophy."

This last work, in company with those of Owen, Carlile, and Austin Holyoake, which last was called "Large and Small Families," were sold openly for some forty years in London and elsewhere, chiefly by the Secular party. In the year 1876, the "Fruits of Philosophy" was attacked as an obscene publication under a new Act of Parliament, called "Lord Campbell's Act," and a Bristol bookseller named Cook was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for selling it. Mr. Charles Watts, the London publisher of the work, was also prosecuted; but, on his submission, he was allowed to get free with the payment of costs. This did not suit the views of the more chivalrous of the Secularist party, and accordingly Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Annie Besant, the leaders of that party in England, issued the work again with a preface, and invited the authorities to prosecute them. The "Fruits of Philosophy" was sold openly at 28, Stonecutter Street, London, and as the City authorities prosecuted, the case was sent up for trial to the Queen's Bench, where it was tried before the Lord Chief Justice Cockburn in June, 1877. The details of this most interesting of all trials are to be found in a work published by Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, which should be perused by all who wish to understand how our liberties are gradually acquired. Mr. Bradlaugh, in his admirable speech, maintained that the advocacy of all checks to population is lawful, except



such as advise the destruction of the foetus in utero, or the child after birth. The Lord Chief Justice admitted the truth of the principle of population, and summed up most favorably to the defendants; but the jury being quite new to the question, gave the following verdict: "We are unanimously of opinion that the book in question is calculated to deprave public morals; but at the same time we entirely exonerate the defendants from any corrupt motives in publishing it." It turned out that the indictment was faulty; and, on appeal to a higher court, the defendants were set free from the fine and imprisonment imposed on them by Chief Justice Cockburn, which he sentenced them to because they went on selling the pamphlet. In the year 1877 the Malthusian League, a society for the propagation of Malthusian literature, was inaugurated. In February, 1878, Mr. Edward Truelove, bookseller, of Holborn, London, was prosecuted by the authorities of the City of London, for the publication of the Hon. R. D. Owen's pamphlet "Moral Physiology," and another pamphlet entitled "Individual, Family, and National Poverty." His case was admirably defended by Mr. William Hunter, and Mr. Truelove was set free; but a second trial took place shortly after this at the Old Bailey, and the jury then gave a verdict of guilty, on which the judge sentenced the defendant to a fine of £200 and a period of four months' imprisonment. Fortunately, Mr. Truelove's health was excellent, and he supported his period of imprisonment without injury, emerging from his prison a hero to all those who understand the immense value of the cause for which he suffered. No further trials have taken place of such works in London, although Mrs. Annie Besant's new pamphlet, the "Law of Population," and others have had a quite enormous sale of recent years. In the North of England and in Scotland, there is still a remnant of the old persecuting spirit, for a travelling hawker named Mr. Williamson has been imprisoned at Goole and in Lincolnshire for selling Mrs. Besant's pamphlet in 1887. In the same year Dr. Henry Arthur Allbutt of Leeds, published a medical work called "The Wife's Handbook," which gave details of how the size of a family might be controlled by married people; and the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1887 summoned him in March to come up in three months time, to show cause why he should not be deprived of his diploma for this act of common humanity. A host of protests and petitions were at once despatched to the Fellows of the College, showing them the gross wickedness of this action of theirs;

and the consequence of this was that up to July, 1887, Dr. H. Arthur Allbutt had heard nothing more of this atrocious persecution by the governing body of a noble profession against one of its members for telling the poor how to get rid of poverty. Hopes are entertained that not only may that body of physicians withdraw its opposition to Dr. H. A. Allbutt's work ; but that they may even see fit to act the generous part, and, whilst confessing their error, ask for forgiveness from outraged humanity.



## Appendix.

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At the Annual Meeting of the Malthusian League in May, 1887, held in London at the South Place Institute, Finsbury, DR. CHARLES R. DRYSDALE, President of the Malthusian League, read the Presidential Address, which contained the following passages:—

To that objection to the Neo-Malthusian propaganda which is usually successful with timid people, that incontinence would be increased if the means recommended by New-Malthusians were adopted, Mr. Place says: "I am of opinion it would not; so much depends on manners, that it seems to be by no means an unreasonable expectation that, if these were so improved as greatly to increase the prudential habits, and to encourage the love of distinction, the master-spring of public prosperity, and if, in consequence of the course recommended, all could marry early, there would be less debauchery of any kind. An improvement in manners would be an improvement in morals; and it seems absurd to suppose an increase of vice with improved morals."

Mr. James Mill, a friend of Mr. Place, writing also in 1820, (article "Colony," *Encyclop. Brit.*) speaks of the question of checking population rationally as "the most important practical problem to which the wisdom of the politician and the moralist can be applied." "If," he says, "the superstitions of the nursery were discarded, and the principles of utility kept steadily in view, a solution might not be difficult to be found, and the means of drying up one of the most copious sources of human evil—a source which, if all other sources of evil were taken away, would alone suffice to retain the great mass of human beings in misery, might be seen to be neither doubtful nor difficult to be applied."

Mr. Francis Place and Mr. James Mill exhibited in these utterances one of the qualities of true men of science—that is, they were enabled to foretell truly what has taken place before the end of the century in civilised countries like England and France. The truth of their prophecies is shown in the fact that the inhabitants of France, who, at the commencement of this century, had a birth-rate of 33 children annually per 1000 of inhabitants, have now one of 26 per 1000; while the West

End of London shows a still lower birth-rate than this—in Kensington of 20, in St. George, Hanover Square, of 19, and in Hampstead Parish of 22 per 1000. In France, the low birth-rate is due, as every intelligent person now knows, to Neo-Malthusian practices and not to celibacy, for France contains, in every 1000 inhabitants, 140 married women between the ages of fifteen and fifty, against 133 in this country and under 128 in Prussia. This prudence among the French population, since the time of the French Revolution, seems to have been due to a certain extent to the acquisition of landed property by the masses of the population, and also to the law of equal inheritance in France, which prohibits parents from leaving their real or personal estates to one person. The extreme desire to keep the land in the hands of a few descendants has made the more respectable of the French peasants the most careful of Europeans. Thus we find, from an essay by the late Dr. Bertillon, that in the thirty departments of France where there are the greatest number of proprietors of land, 285 per 1000 inhabitants, the birth-rate is only 24·7, against 28·1 in those departments where there are only 177 proprietors per 1000 of the population. The professional classes in France are so thoughtful in regard to the number of children they bring into the world, that they do not have quite two children (1·75) to a family; whilst the average children to a family in France does not exceed 3, against 5 in Germany, 4½ in England, 5½ in Scotland, and 5½ in poor and distressed Ireland. How true it is, then, what James Mill and Mr. Francis Place predicted!

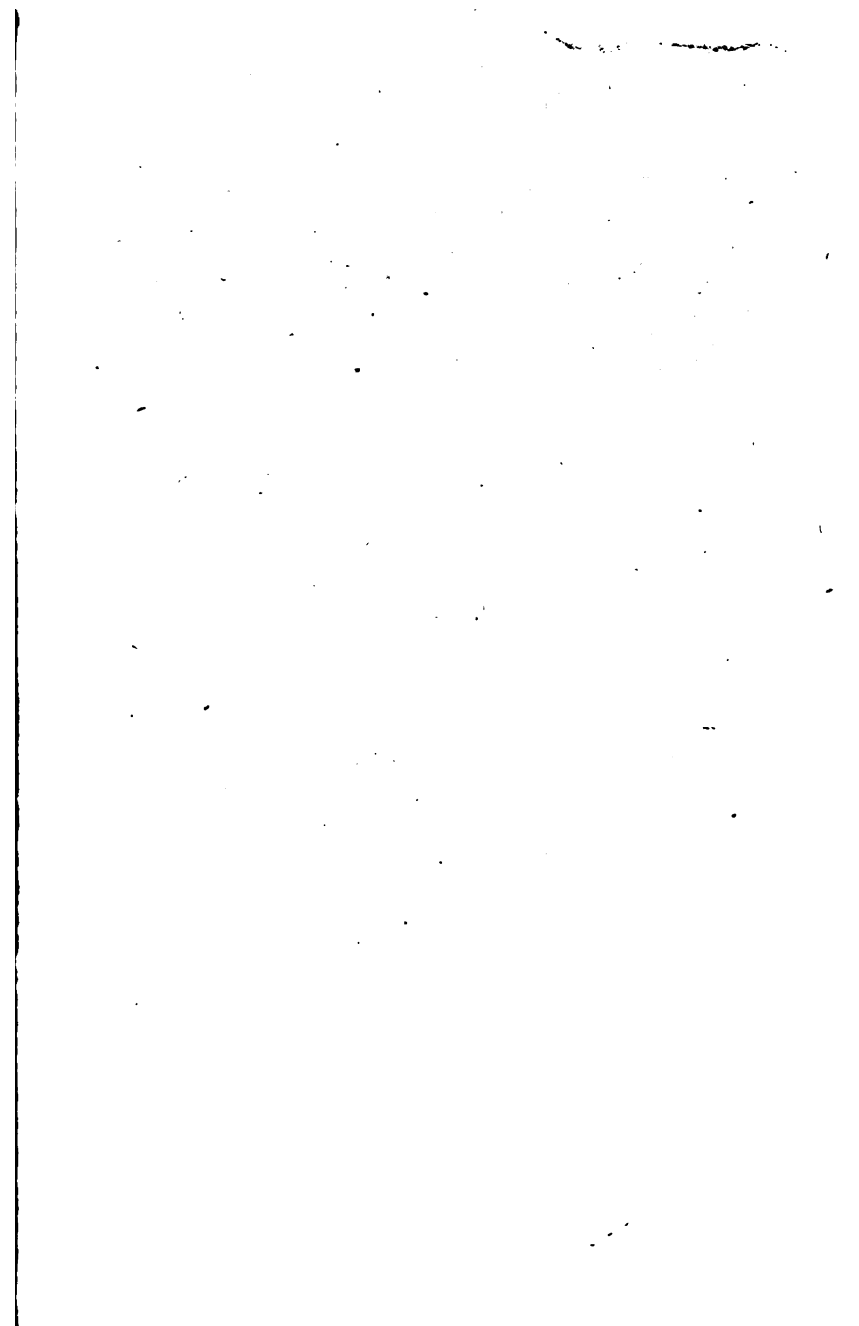
Universally we may say of modern Europeans, that the poorer classes are less prudent in the size of their families; and, indeed, it has been said by M. de Haussenville ("La vie et les salaires à Paris") that the number of children to a family in the poor quarters of Paris is three times as great as it is in the rich quarters. The same story holds nearly true in modern London since 1877—*i.e.*, since the date of the trial of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Annie Besant; for the birth-rate in Kensington is at present 20 per 1000, against 40 per 1000 in Bethnal Green, a result which is yearly becoming due rather to small families in the West End than to late marriages or celibacy, the old-fashioned causes of lower birth-rates. The celebrated cases of "*Regina v. Bradlaugh and Besant*," "*Regina v. Edward Truelove*," and, at this moment, of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh against the esteemed and learned physician, Dr. H. A. Allbutt, of Leeds, who is threat-

ened by that body with expulsion from the list of its members, because he has published, in a popular work of a practical character, what has been said so many times, that large families lead to early death, prostitution, and every horror to which mortality is subject, have disclosed the fact that there is an idea strongly implanted in the minds of the majority of mankind, that, if people in general knew, especially at an early age, what any medical student knows as soon as he commences to study anatomy and physiology, vice and profligacy would immediately abound. This is, indeed, a strange idea. Civilisation differs from savage life mainly in that civilised men know more of nature than savages; but, just on that very account, civilised people are more moral than savages. "It is impossible for us to understand," says M. Joseph Garnier, "how the counsels of marital prudence can lead to the abolition of marriage and the debauchery of the young. Has not prudence the effect of rendering the state of marriage more happy and more attractive? Youth is encouraged to marriage more easily by the example of prosperous and wisely managed households than by the example of households crushed under the tortures of misery." And M. Villermé, one of the greatest writers on Health that this century has produced, mentions that the workmen of La Croix Rouge, Lyons, had, in his day, an average of only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  children to a family; and that "these workmen were the foremost in France for behavior and dignity of character." "The question is," says a distinguished Vice-President of the Malthusian League, Mr. Van Houten, Deputy at the Hague, "whether morality can demand that a married couple shall have offspring immediately after their marriage; that constantly, as soon as the mother, after giving birth to one, is able, a second one should at once succeed the first. The question is, whether those less blessed with worldly goods must restrain their desires and remain celibates, because they are unable, while following the traditional morality, to provide for a family? Or whether those whose inclination for one another, or whose trust in the future was too great when their expectations proved deceptive, must be condemned, in the name of morality, to procreate children who will be insufficiently fed, tended and educated, and can never become energetic citizens, or who, if sickly, are born only to descend speedily to the grave, to be succeeded by others equally unfortunate." Mr. Van Houten truly says: "An end must be put to our ignorance of physiology. Everyone ought to *know*; and it must be left to his own requirements and to his own judgment what use he ' f his knowledge."

How dangerous such superstitions as those referred to by Mr. Van Houten are to the happiness of mankind is best seen in the old civilisations of Hindostan and China. Owing to certain strange doctrines in those countries as to the importance of children as a religious duty, the unfortunate Hindoo people are so terribly over-peopled that a man will work hard for wages equivalent to six shillings a month. The most learned of Italian medical writers on health, Senator Paulo Mantegazza, mentions that his work was placed on the Index by the Pope of Rome in 1863, because he had ventured to recommend to persons afflicted with hereditary disease, such as insanity or epilepsy, or to excessively poor people, to marry but to have as few children as possible. When two human beings (says that author) love each other, and yet from the bad health of one or both of them there is every likelihood that diseased children will result, is it a greater fault to engender epileptic, insane, or scrofulous children, or to prevent such births? Or when, from the excessive increase of the family itself, human beings are brought into the world almost inexorably condemned to hunger, to degradation, to disease, is it a greater sin to limit the number of children or to increase the sufferings of the human family? What reply ought we to give? Whilst the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh is displaying to the denizens of the end of the 19th century, an amount of ignorance and conventional bigotry which will be incredible to the next generation, it is remarkable that what is usually considered the most benighted Church in Christendom, the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church, has latterly shown evident signs of admitting that Neo-Malthusian practices, which are so habitually made use of in France, must at least be acknowledged to be morally innocent. Thus, in 1870, the Vatican Council was implored by a French priest, Dr. Friedrich, to reconsider its judgment on conjugal prudence: "and not to cause the damnation of so many millions of souls by letting the directors (confessors) lay upon their consciences, commands or prohibitions impossible to observe. It will be our duty (he exclaims) to search in the holy books alone for condemnation of the act in question; if it be found to be forbidden neither by the decalogue nor by the other laws of God contained in Holy Writ, nor by the apostles, nor by the commands of the Church assembled in Council General, nor by the Pope speaking *ex cathedra*, we shall say it (conjugal prudence) cannot be condemned by anyone." Dr. Friedrich continues: "A learned and holy devotee of a very austere

Order says : ' I have studied this case with all the powers of my intelligence and of my conscience, and I have come to this formal conviction, that we are on the wrong track. To my mind, this act is enormously below the smallest mortal sin, and it is enormously lessened by all the motives that provoke it, real motives of health, even of interest, of family, &c.' " Lastly, he informs us that Rome has enjoined on confessors to question very little and to dwell as little as possible upon this subject. Surely, after this, the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh might hesitate ! What Rome has done, other churches might surely do ; and I am pleased to say that many excellent members of the English Establishment are inclined to side with the Malthusian League in its earnest recommendation to all classes of the community to replace the heartrending positive checks to population—war, pestilence, and famine—and the torturing agonies of prolonged celibacy, which Dr. Bertillon's statistics show to be so inimical even to longevity, by the far more humane and rational plan of early marriage conjoined with very much smaller families than are at the present time the fashion among all classes. Some check to population we must submit to ; and there is not the slightest doubt in my own mind that the morality of the near future will look upon the production of large families in European states as the most anti-social of all the actions of a citizen. Then, and not till then, will indigence disappear from the face of all civilised society.







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